

BUDGET 2022

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA | 2022-25

Ministry Business Plan Children's Services



Children's Services

Business Plan 2022-25

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:

- Prevention, early intervention and post-intervention supports;
- Child care and early childhood development, including supports for children with diverse needs in child care settings;
- Licensing, monitoring and workforce supports for child care programs;
- Family Resource Network preventative programming;
- Youth in care mentorship;
- Indigenous child and family connections;
- Intervention for children at home and in care;
- Adoption, post adoption registry and guardianship services; 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 were in care within the past two years.

The five-year Canada-Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Agreement provides significant investment for greater access to a range of child care options for families and children allowing parents to participate in training, education or the workforce knowing their children are safe and supported. The ministry works with licensed child care operators, municipalities and community-based organizations to improve the availability and quality of child care, particularly in areas of the province with limited or no access to licensed child care. The ministry remains committed to supporting inclusive and culturally appropriate licensed child care services whether located in schools, communities, workplaces or home settings so parents, including those in jobs with non-traditional or unpredictable schedules can choose the options that work best for their family.

Collaboration with other ministries is essential to support healthy child development and affordability, especially for families who need it most. High-quality child care and early education settings provide an opportunity to identify and serve children at risk, while building and supporting the family's capacity to meet their physical or mental health needs. Safe and quality programs are delivered by educated, well-supported child care providers and early educators and are built on positive, responsive relationships, engaging environments and meaningful experiences for children and families.

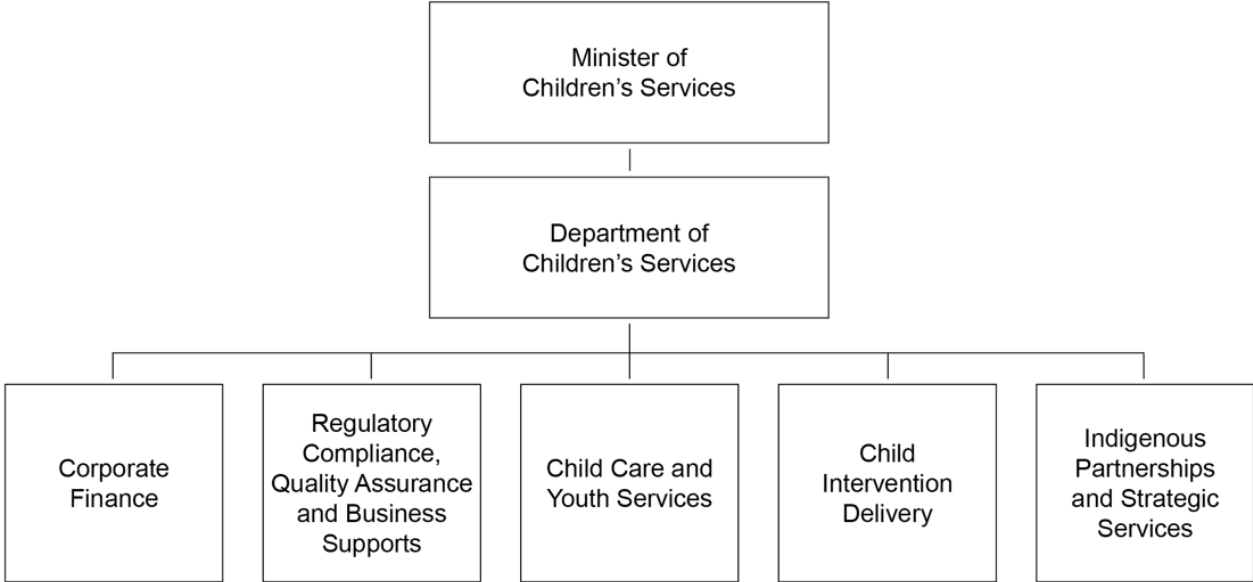
The ministry succeeds in delivering on its mandate through advocacy and partnership with other levels of government, agencies and civil society organizations. Children's Services works closely with First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous communities to support opportunities for Indigenous children and youth to maintain and enhance connections with their family and community focusing on the importance of 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, physical, psychological and emotional safety and well-being are most important 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 honouring the cultural aspects of communities and the child’s involvement in those communities, recognizing the importance of lasting relationships with family and friends, and collaborating with broader community services, school boards, primary care providers, parents and caregivers. The ministry also collaborates with other ministries and communities to combat human trafficking, child exploitation and domestic violence.

Children’s Services helps prepare youth transitioning out of government care into adulthood through a range of programs and services, including social and emotional supports, financial agreements, tuition and living expenses for youth pursuing post-secondary education. The ministry also funds mentorship initiatives for at-risk youth and youth suicide prevention.

The ministry is working to ensure digital services are designed with accessibility at the 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 protecting and supporting Albertans and job creators by reducing red tape by one-third by 2023, modernizing regulations, eliminating unnecessary regulatory requirements, and reducing administrative burden through more efficient processes including digital solutions.

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 that enable participation in training, education or 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 in and support Alberta’s economic recovery.
- 1.2 Enhance quality licensed child care through workforce investments that strengthen the recruitment and retention of skilled childhood educators and support their capacity to deliver quality child care.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2022-23, the ministry will allocate \$879.0 million to improve access to affordable child care for families with children enrolled in licensed programs by providing parent subsidies and program affordability grants and by creating 10,000 new licensed child care spaces in the not-for-profit sector.
- In 2022-23, \$197.1 million is allocated to support the child care workforce through child care certification, professional development and wage top ups.

Performance Metrics

1.a **Performance Measure: percentage change 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. Child care programs safely operate while leveraging federal investments for focused space creation. In 2020-21, there was a 4 per cent increase in the number of licensed child care spaces.

Targets	2022-23	8%	2023-24	11%	2024-25	12%
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1.b **Performance Indicator: enrollment in Facility-Based Child Care programs, Family Day Home, Innovative and Group Family Child Care.**

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Spaces ¹ (preschool)	106,923 (17,901)	114,436 (17,188)	121,671 (16,696)	127,860 (15,609)
Enrollment ¹ (preschool)	86,530 (14,399)	92,254 (13,456)	97,553 (11,789 ²)	71,579 (12,678 ³)
Rate of Enrollment ¹ (preschool)	80.9% (80.4%)	80.6% (78.3%)	80.2% (70.6%)	56.0% (81.2%)
Children receiving subsidy	27,031	25,272	28,320	22,967 ⁴

¹ Excludes preschool as preschool are reported separately in parentheses. ² December 2019 data used for March 2020; ³ March 22-26, 2021 survey data used to estimate for March 2021; ⁴ March 2021 data used in place of the annual average due to COVID-19.

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 supports for youth to successfully transition from government care into adulthood; and build on available support services, mentorship, educational attainment and employment readiness.

- 2.2 Partner with Indigenous Governing Bodies to develop agreements ensuring greater authority for Indigenous child and family services.
- 2.3 Improve access to a range of prevention and early intervention programs and services for children, youth and their families that support child safety, well-being and development and caregiver capacity and support.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2022-23, \$912.6 million is allocated to support youth with child intervention involvement, transition to adulthood, mentoring supports and the Advancing Futures Bursary program.
- In 2022-23, \$63.0 million is allocated to support prevention and early intervention services through the Family Resource Network program.

Performance Metrics

2.a **Performance Measure: percentage of youth receiving supports from the Advancing Futures program who successfully complete their planned studies.** Demonstrates how well the ministry is addressing the needs of youth transitioning from government care to post-secondary education. In 2020-21, 89 per cent of youth receiving supports successfully completed their planned studies.

Targets	2022-23	89%	2023-24	89%	2024-25	89%
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2.b **Performance Measure: percentage of children in care placed in family-based care.** Demonstrates the ministry's commitment to prioritizing the best interests of children by placing them in kinship care, foster care and permanency placements, and with parents and relatives. In 2020-21, 86 per cent of Indigenous children and 86 per cent of non-Indigenous children were placed in family-based care.

Targets Indigenous	2022-23	87%	2023-24	87%	2024-25	88%
Non-Indigenous	2022-23	87%	2023-24	87%	2024-25	88%

Outcome 3

Reduction in red tape imposed by legislation, regulations and associated policies and forms improves services for children, youth and families

Key Objectives

- 3.1 Advance online services and strengthen the management of digital information to improve interactions between government and Albertans.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2022-23, \$11.3 million is allocated to further the Pathways to Paperless initiative and support the modernization of the child care system.

Performance Metrics

3.a **Performance Measure: percent reduction of red tape to enhance services for children, youth and families.** Red tape reduction is achieved through innovation such as the elimination of unnecessary forms. In 2020-21, the ministry reduced its red tape by 23.6 per cent.

Targets	2022-23	33%	2023-24	Net Zero	2024-25	Net Zero
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STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable			2022-23 Estimate	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target
	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Budget	2021-22 Forecast			
REVENUE						
Services to First Nations Reserves	42,953	45,678	47,678	45,678	45,678	45,678
Other Federal Transfers	83,642	76,051	275,840	769,022	929,821	1,097,051
Premiums, Fees and Licences	60	55	55	55	55	55
Other Revenue	31,829	7,699	7,699	7,699	7,699	7,699
Ministry Total	158,484	129,483	331,272	822,454	983,253	1,150,483
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(37)	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated Total	158,447	129,483	331,272	822,454	983,253	1,150,483
EXPENSE						
Ministry Support Services	5,842	5,928	5,928	5,928	5,928	5,928
Child Intervention	808,143	843,141	843,141	846,787	845,346	844,346
Child Care	380,813	395,057	530,783	1,076,132	1,237,931	1,406,661
Early Intervention Services for Children and Youth	129,507	131,862	131,862	128,804	128,804	128,804
Indigenous Partnerships and Strategic Services	7,215	10,142	9,142	10,237	9,987	9,987
Alberta Child Benefit	48,297	-	-	-	-	-
Alberta Child and Family Benefit	219,314	345,000	345,000	335,000	325,000	325,000
Ministry Total	1,599,131	1,731,130	1,865,856	2,402,888	2,552,996	2,720,726
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(9,432)	(13,700)	(13,700)	(13,700)	(13,700)	(13,700)
Consolidated Total	1,589,699	1,717,430	1,852,156	2,389,188	2,539,296	2,707,026
Net Operating Result	(1,431,252)	(1,587,947)	(1,520,884)	(1,566,734)	(1,556,043)	(1,556,543)
CAPITAL INVESTMENT						
Child Intervention	42	350	542	-	-	-
Child Care	-	-	1,000	7,500	6,500	5,000
Consolidated Total	42	350	1,542	7,500	6,500	5,000