

# A Stronger, Safer Tomorrow

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A Public Action Plan for the Ministerial Panel on Child  
Intervention's Final Recommendations

Children's Services, Government of Alberta

June 28, 2018

A Stronger, Safer Tomorrow: A Public Action Plan for the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention's Final Recommendations

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## Message from the Minister of Children's Services

**This public action plan provides a pathway to a stronger, safer child intervention system that better protects children and youth, and supports families.**

On any given day in Alberta, more than 10,000 children and youth receive child intervention services, and roughly six out of every 10 of these young people are Indigenous. The Government of Alberta has a responsibility to do everything possible to protect and support our province's children, youth and their families, and to continually improve the services and supports we deliver. I think about this every day. As Minister of Children's Services, I strive to make life better for children, youth and families across the province.

The Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention was an unprecedented, open and transparent review of the child intervention system. For more than 12 months, an all-party panel heard from Indigenous leaders, families, communities, international experts, staff and stakeholders. Less than a month after the panel gave its first recommendations, I tabled legislation to ensure the independent Child and Youth Advocate would review every single death of a child in care. *Bill 18: The Child Protection and Accountability Act*, was proclaimed in March 2018.

The second phase of the panel delivered 26 final recommendations derived by consensus, and aimed at reducing the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth receiving services. The action plan I am unveiling today provides a pathway to a safer, stronger child intervention system that better protects children and youth and supports their families.

This plan is a decisive step forward. All of the panel's recommendations have clear actions designed to move our province forward, 16 of which will be completed this fiscal year. These actions improve supports for families and make the system stronger, safer and more accountable. They will include full implementation of Jordan's Principle. They develop new assessment processes for kinship caregivers. They spell out some of the work needed to end the service gap on reserves. They include updates to the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*. And they will create an Indigenous advisory body to guide every step of the way.

In order to make meaningful, lasting change to the child intervention system, I engaged with Indigenous leaders and communities across Alberta. I spoke with our community partners and stakeholders who work directly with vulnerable or at-risk children and youth. An Indigenous lens was a key part in more than 70 per cent of the perspectives that informed this plan. At every meeting, I heard practical ideas and a passion to see improvements become reality.

Children's Services will lead the implementation of this public action plan, but we will not be alone. I will continue to advocate to the federal government and collaborate with my cross-ministry colleagues. Most importantly, Indigenous people will be involved at every step of implementation, jointly working together



**“This plan is a decisive step forward.”**

to develop solutions that meet the needs specific to their communities. I am wholeheartedly committed to reconciliation. To correct historical injustices, we will support Indigenous families and strive to keep their children safe and at home whenever possible.

There is still more work to do. The challenges facing the child intervention system are complex. They cannot be solved overnight. This public action plan provides a roadmap to a future in which children are safely supported and free to reach their full potential, where families can get the supports they need to thrive and where Indigenous children and families in Alberta receive the same level of services, regardless of where they live.

I thank everyone who contributed to this plan. And I look forward to our work together to create the stronger, safer tomorrow that our children, youth and families deserve.

Danielle Larivee  
Minister of Children's Services

# Introduction

This public action plan puts into practice the work of the all-party Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention. Appointed in 2017, the panel was tasked with recommending ways to improve Alberta's child death review process and strengthen the child intervention system as a whole.

Over 12 months, the panel engaged in an unprecedented, open and transparent engagement with stakeholders, families, communities and First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. This included visiting First Nation communities, hearing more than 65 presentations and reviewing more than 300 past recommendations and 448 total submissions from the public, stakeholders and others.

In March 2018, the panel delivered 26 final recommendations to help strengthen Alberta's child intervention system and improve the lives of children, youth and families across the province. It grouped these important recommendations around the following principles:

- A commitment to co-creating a positive future with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.
- A commitment to reconciliation.
- A commitment to supporting families and communities.
- A commitment to integrating meaningful and demonstrable cultural connections into child intervention practice.
- A commitment to using family systems and kinship care to support children and youth.
- A commitment to building a strong, stable workforce that reflects the communities being served.
- A commitment to public education to combat discriminatory mindsets.
- A commitment to actions that enable change, including immediate changes to relevant legislation.

In keeping with the first principle, this public action plan was jointly developed with First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders, children and youth, families, partners, stakeholders and communities from across the province.

## Implementation

Implementation of these actions will address the panel's recommendations and continue the joint development process by empowering First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners and communities to develop the programs and services that work best for them. The actions prioritize cultural and family connections, greater understanding of Indigenous world views and a collaborative focus on the root causes of involvement in the child intervention system — for example, the critical role played by poverty. Because of the complex nature of this work, additional legislative, regulatory and policy changes may be required.

Many of the actions also address interrelated issues of mental health, addictions, poverty and violence identified by families affected by colonialism, the Sixties Scoop and Residential Schools. Children’s Services has heard from Indigenous peoples from all over Alberta how important it is to back up words with actions. Individuals continue to speak of the need for ongoing and continued supports for greater public awareness of these issues, along with ongoing mental health initiatives and supports for families. As the Alberta government moves forward, it will continue to collaborate with Indigenous communities and the Government of Canada to set priorities, develop solutions and implement actions.

## Timelines and Principles



The public action plan outlines a strategy for strengthening the child intervention system and better supporting children, youth and families. To address urgent needs, a number of specific actions will be implemented immediately, while work on all actions will be completed by 2022. While this action plan outlines next steps, many of the actions and principles are not new. While each action remains a priority, further collaboration may still be needed to determine exactly how an action will be fully implemented. To underline the connectedness of this plan, each action is linked to one of eight key principles represented with the following icons:

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Co-creating a positive future
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Reconciliation
- 

Support families and communities
- 

Sustain cultural connections
- 

Utilize the strengths of family and kinship care
- 

Support a strong, stable workforce
- 

Combatting discriminatory mindsets
- 

Enabling the change

# Measuring our progress

*Specific measures for each action are outlined in Appendix B, beginning on page 54.*

As part of implementation, the following outcomes will be further refined and additional measures will be developed, including targets identified jointly with Indigenous peoples and communities. In addition, baseline measures will be developed for those areas not currently tracked, such as: Improved access to prevention and early intervention programs and services, children, youth and family safety, well-being and cultural connectedness. These measures will build on the measurable progress identified by the panel. More importantly, they will help ensure that Indigenous culture, values and what is most important to Indigenous communities is measured and used to further inform policy, programs and services.

To start, the measures will focus on the following desired shifts or outcomes. These will also be refined through our work with Indigenous peoples and communities:

- Children and youth involved in child intervention are safe and healthy.
- Indigenous world view is more fully integrated into child intervention legislation, policy, practice, research and evaluation.
- Children and youth involved with child intervention have strengthened connections with their kin, communities and cultures.
- Government of Alberta and contracted agency staff provide services culturally aligned to the population served.
- Service equity is achieved on and off reserve.
- Children, youth and families have improved access to prevention and early intervention programs and services that are culturally relevant and include Indigenous world views.
- Children and youth have increased access to safe, stable and long-term homes.
- Kinship caregivers receive improved support to provide for the health and well-being of children who need out-of-home care.
- Service delivery staff in Children's Services receive increased workplace support.

Specific measures for each action are outlined in Appendix B. In keeping with the Government of Alberta's commitment to increased transparency and accountability, Children's Services will report on progress through annual reporting and other public reports in order to monitor the strengthening of the safety and well-being of children, youth and families who interact with the child intervention system.



# Immediate actions: To be completed in 2018–19

As part of the Government of Alberta's work to support the safety and well-being of children, youth and families, 16 immediate actions have been identified. These steps will strengthen connections and services in Indigenous communities, meet urgent needs and make a meaningful difference in the lives of children.

More than \$4.3 million in new funding has been allocated in *Budget 2018* to begin work immediately while Children's Services determines the financial supports necessary for the next steps. Many of these actions have already started, building a foundation for the short- and long-term improvements to follow.

## Embedding an Indigenous world view in legislation, policy and programs

1. **Amend Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act Phase 1:** In fall 2018, the Government of Alberta will introduce amendments to the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (CYFEA) that propose changes in three key areas:
  - a. The act will incorporate a purpose and principles to guide the interpretation of CYFEA. The purpose and principles will focus on the safety and well-being of children, while respecting the principles of Indigenous cultural connectedness and the diversity of child-rearing practices, and offering a broad understanding of family. Principles will align with the:
    - (i) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
    - (ii) United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
    - (iii) Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action
  - b. The act will increase accountability and transparency, including requiring:
    - (i) Clear accountability requirements for child safety and decision-making.
    - (ii) Open, transparent and regular public reporting to ensure a robust internal quality assurance function is in place that improves the agility of the system to respond and making changes to services and supports provided to a family.
    - (iii) An all-party review of CYFEA every five years.
  - c. The act will support cultural connections and permanency by:
    - (i) Striving to achieve equitable service provision for Indigenous children and families on and off reserve through continued work with Indigenous partners and all levels of government.
    - (ii) Addressing the unique safety and well-being requirements for children receiving intervention services.

- (iii) Identifying safety and connection to family as the primary considerations in deciding what is in the best interest of a child or youth.

The proposed amendments would increase safety and accountability in the child intervention system, while keeping all children and youth, including Indigenous children, connected to their cultures and communities. Ultimately, these actions would help improve child safety and well-being, and help families access the supports they need in Alberta.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #21.*

**2. Indigenous policy, programs and services:** Establish three advisory bodies:

- 1) An Indigenous Advisory Body with First Nations, Métis and Inuit representatives, including Indigenous caregivers, to oversee implementation and inform how an Indigenous world view can be embedded in policy and programs.
- 2) An Indigenous Grandmothers’ Circle to provide advice, wisdom and pass on their knowledge to inform policy affecting their communities.
- 3) A Youth Advisory Committee to provide the viewpoint of youth with lived experience.

These groups will meet three times a year, or as needed, and work with the existing Elders’ Wisdom Circle to inform how implementation is jointly developed with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities. They will be vital to ensuring that changes to the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* are informed by Indigenous beliefs and values, and that services support Indigenous peoples and communities.

This action will help shape the implementation of the public action plan and ensure meaningful ongoing participation by Indigenous communities in strengthening the child intervention system. Read the full action in detail on page 21.



*This action will help address panel recommendations #2, #4 and #5.*

**3. Increase cultural understanding and skills:** Allocate \$500,000 to implement the Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework to help Children’s Services staff develop additional cultural understanding skills to become more effective when working with multicultural and diverse clients, including Indigenous children, youth and families. The framework will also inform the best way to support contracted agency service delivery staff in developing their skills and knowledge.

This will help ensure that all staff have the cultural awareness, understanding and skills necessary to better assist children and families. Read the full action in detail on page 22.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #18.*

**4. Address racism:** Alberta is committed to promoting an inclusive society built on a foundation of mutual respect. Children’s Services will work with Education and other ministries to identify commitments, including educational opportunities and training, to address racism.



Co-creating a positive future



Reconciliation



Support families and communities



Sustain cultural connections



Utilize the strengths of family and kinship care



Support a strong, stable workforce



Combatting discriminatory mindsets



Enabling the change

While the Government of Alberta is making progress in combatting racism, there is more work to be done. This action will improve cultural awareness among Albertans and support reconciliation in line with the government's Sixties Scoop apology. Read the full action in detail on page 23.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #20.*

## Building capacity of children, youth and families

- 5. Support the health and well-being of our communities:** Commit an initial \$400,000 to jointly develop programs with Indigenous communities that involve parenting, social connections and relationships, learning about culture, expanding mental wellness services, and youth programs, such as summer and winter camps, self-care and art-based programs.

This action will focus specific preventative programs to better support youth and families before and during involvement in the child intervention system. Read the full action in detail on page 23.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #9*

- 6. Support self-determination and prevention and early intervention services:** Address social inequalities by providing provincial funding, in addition to provided federal funding, for prevention and early intervention programs:

- \$2 million to promote Indigenous-led, self-determined services tailored to the needs of individual communities, such as expanding programming through Parent Link Centres and on-reserve home visitation.

This action will help develop partnerships with Indigenous communities and begin to address some of the inequities in child protection and early intervention services faced by Indigenous communities. Read the full action in detail on page 24.



*This action will help address panel recommendations #3 and #23.*

- 7. Fully implement Jordan's Principle:** To ensure that all First Nations children receive the services they need when they need them, the Government of Alberta will support First Nations' access to these services, whether through a designated navigator or by removing barriers to health, social and educational services.

The Alberta government will support First Nations in advocating to the federal government and will take action when needed to help First Nations communities obtain services for the healthy development of their families and communities. A memorandum of understanding will also be developed with the Government of Alberta, Government of Canada and First Nation representatives to reinforce and establish a working relationship to make sure services are provided.

No child should be denied services simply because of where they live. This action will help every First Nation child in Alberta receive the services they need in a timely way. Read the full action in detail on page 25.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #6*



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the change

## Supporting and empowering our youth

- 8. Increase supports for youth transitioning to adulthood:** Establish a Youth Advisory Committee to develop concrete activities to improve supports for youth transitioning into adulthood, including budgeting and relationship-building skills, obtaining employment and accessing post-secondary education.

This action will help support young people during the challenging transition of developing into healthy, successful adults. Read the full action in detail on page 26.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #11.*

- 9. Increase funding for youth suicide prevention:** \$1 million for suicide prevention programs and services for youth who are involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the child intervention system by:

- Jointly developing programs with Indigenous communities, stakeholders and youth that help build positive relationships, deal with challenges, address early substance abuse and repair family relationships.

One youth lost to suicide is one too many. This action will help the government work with Indigenous youth, families and communities to support the healthy development of Alberta's young people. Read the full action in detail on page 26.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #9.*

## Reducing the number of Indigenous children in care

- 10. Increase supports, training and availability of safe kinship care providers:** Increase the number of kinship care providers, including Indigenous advisers, to ensure that homes are safe and provide caregivers with the supports they need for the health and stability for the child.

A holistic kinship assessment tool will be piloted to support kinship homes as the preferred safe option for children and youth who need out-of-home care. This will include assessing the unique placement needs of the child and the unique dynamics involved in being a kinship care provider, and identifying the types of supports needed to support the safety and well-being of the child.

This action will help kinship caregivers provide safe, stable and nurturing care that promotes well-being and maintains strong connections with family, peers and their communities. Read the full action in detail on page 27.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #16.*

- 11. Kinship care providers have the supports to provide for the well-being of children and youth:** Provide kinship caregivers more supports when needed for successful placements and stability for children and youth requiring out-of-home care. This will include providing kinship care providers with financial support equitable to foster caregivers and providing child-specific supports from training to counselling, as well as additional, dedicated, available and responsive caseworkers.



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This action will support the stability of kinship caregivers to provide safe, stable and nurturing care for children and youth. Read the full action in detail on page 27



*This action will help address panel recommendation #16.*

- 12. Support Indigenous children, youth and families – First Nation Band Designate role:** \$400,000 will be committed to support work to clarify the First Nation Band Designate role and establish a funding model to support Indigenous children, youth and families when they are receiving child intervention services.

This action will help Indigenous families connect with their communities and receive the services they need. Read the full action in detail on page 28.



*This action will help address panel recommendations #4, #5 and #21.*

- 13. Support Alberta’s Child Advocacy Centres to reduce child abuse and neglect:** Through partnerships between the Government of Alberta and service providers, establish a predictable and sustainable long-term funding model for Alberta’s seven Child Advocacy Centres.

This action will help reduce child abuse and neglect by improving services and supports for those children, youth and families experiencing sexual abuse and other forms of abuse and neglect. Read the full action in detail on page 29.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #10.*

## Improving our child intervention system

- 14. Empower the voices of children, youth and families to drive continuous improvement:** Pilot a new and ongoing client feedback, monitoring and reporting system that incorporates the voices of children, youth, families and kinship and foster caregivers to continuously improve the child intervention system, including improvements to policy, kinship and foster care, and service delivery.

This action will give a stronger voice to those involved in the system and help them shape and improve all aspects of the child intervention system, including how foster care is delivered. Read the full action in detail on page 29.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #17.*

- 15. Support Indigenous-led research:** Establish and fund an Indigenous Research Committee to support Indigenous-led and community-based research. This committee will include Indigenous scholars, researchers and funders, as well as representatives from institutions, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities.

This action will support using Indigenous-led research to improve service delivery in Alberta. Read the full action in detail on page 30.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #24.*



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**16. Improve workplace culture:** In partnership with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, improve workplace culture and provide additional opportunities for one-on-one peer support and mentoring, including the establishment of an Indigenous Support Network to access Elders and cultural ceremonies such as smudges.

This action will strengthen services by providing employees with more one-on-one support and assistance to effectively complete their work. Read the full action in detail on page 31.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #19.*

## Short-term actions: Completed by 2020

The Government of Alberta will fully implement these actions by 2020. This will include continuing to work together with First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders, children and youth, families, partners and stakeholders to jointly develop solutions that meet the needs of Indigenous peoples and communities.

### Building capacity of children, youth and families

**17. Support children, youth and families through mentoring:** Indigenous families and communities will be supported in developing cultural mentoring and peer-support programs and services.

This action will help children, youth and families develop healthy relationships and connect to their culture and communities. Read the full action in detail on page 33.



*This action will help address panel recommendations #7 and #15.*

**18. Help families heal from trauma:** Improve trauma-informed programs and services, including establishing holistic trauma-healing centres, supporting Elders to help their communities, developing traditional emotional healing programs and expanding ceremonial places to heal and host ceremonies.

This action will foster healing and growth, and will repair existing relationships while offering healthy self-expression for people experiencing trauma. Read the full action in detail on page 34.



*This action will help address panel recommendations #7 and #15.*

### Reducing the number of Indigenous children in care

**19. Amend the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act – Phase 2:** As part of a multi-phase review, Children’s Services will implement amendments to the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act* by fall 2019, including:

- Clarifying the First Nation Band Designate role.
- Exploring alternative permanency options and other provisions that may be needed to further implement the panel recommendations.



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These amendments will continue to increase the safety and accountability in the child intervention system, while keeping all children and youth, including Indigenous children, connected to their cultures and communities, including when they need out-of-home care such as kinship or foster care.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #21.*

**20. Increase family involvement in decision-making:** Increase early and ongoing participation of Indigenous peoples and families in all critical decision points in the child intervention system, including strengthening family involvement in placements such as kinship and foster care.

This action will help families actively participate in the decisions that profoundly affect them, including assessment, case planning and child placements such as foster care. Read the full action in detail on page 35.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #15.*

**21. Support the healthy development of children and youth with complex needs:** Increase available placement options and access for children and youth with complex needs by obtaining therapeutic out-of-home care services and reorganizing existing services across the province.

This action will ensure that a range of placements are available to support the healthy development of children and youth who may require services related to mental health, criminal justice, disability, education and other areas. Read the full action in detail on page 35.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #10.*

**22. Improve service delivery for children and youth with disabilities and their families:** Strengthen service delivery for children and youth with disabilities – and their families – who are also receiving child intervention services to ensure they receive the necessary supports when they need them.

This action will support families with children and youth who have disabilities receive a continuum of services regardless of the challenges they face. Read the full action in detail on page 36.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #10.*

**23. Increase mental health and addiction services:** Improve mental health and addiction services for children, youth and their families prior to and throughout child intervention involvement, including when they are in out-of-home care such as kinship or foster care, by prioritizing the *Valuing Mental Health* report recommendations. Services will be responsive, culturally appropriate and accessible.

This action will assist families in accessing quality mental health and addiction services and supports when they need them. Read the full action in detail on page 37.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #9.*



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## Strengthening the child intervention workforce

**24. Improve post-secondary opportunities for youth:** Provide more opportunities and resources for youth involved in the child intervention system to pursue post-secondary education.

This action will help youth reach their full potential as they transition to adulthood. Read the full action in detail on page 38.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #11.*

**25. Develop services to reflect the culture, language and spirituality of those served:** Increase the cultural understanding and competency of service delivery staff, including contracted agencies and out-of-home placements such as kinship and foster care, to connect Indigenous children, youth and families with their culture.

This action will help connect children, youth and families with their culture, traditions, ceremonies and communities. Read the full action in detail on page 39.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #14.*

## Long-term actions: Completed by 2022

The Government of Alberta will fully implement these long-term actions by the end of 2022. The joint development and implementation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners will continue as new opportunities for collaboration are identified, partnerships formed and relationships with Indigenous communities continue to be strengthened. Together with Indigenous partners, the government will develop local solutions and more responsive, integrated services that better meet the needs of children, youth and families across Alberta.

## Embedding an Indigenous world view in legislation, policy and programs

**26. Amend the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*:** Phase 3: Complete an all-party review of the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* by the fall of 2021 and identify other amendments that may be needed.

These amendments will continue to increase the safety and accountability in the child intervention system, while keeping all children and youth, including Indigenous children, connected to their cultures and communities, including when they need out-of-home care such as kinship and foster care.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #21.*



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**27. Develop a foundation to inform policy and services impacting Indigenous peoples:** Develop partnerships and agreements among the Government of Alberta, the Government of Canada, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities to support Indigenous self-determination, address discrimination and historical injustices, improve family and cultural connections, complete Indigenous-led research and develop Indigenous community-led programs and services.

This action will support Indigenous people and communities to be self-determining and move forward on reconciliation. Read the full action in detail on page 41.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #3.*

## Building capacity of children, youth and families

**28. Improving prevention and early intervention supports:** Improve prevention and early intervention services by increasing accountability for coordinated cross-ministry funding and outcomes, including establishing and measuring safety and wellness, reducing risk and increasing protective factors, accessing specialized services for children and youth with complex needs, and addressing inequalities between on- and off-reserve services related to addictions, mental health, respite services, family violence and parenting skills.

This action will focus on addressing the root causes for child intervention involvement and support children, youth and families when they need it. Read the full action in detail on page 42.



*This action will help address panel recommendations #8 and #23.*

**29. Increase access to trauma-informed supports and treatment:** Increase access to trauma-informed supports and treatment for children, youth and families, caregivers including kinship and foster care, and service delivery staff through providing service navigators, training, child care, transportation for access to programs and peer support programs.

This action will offer specific, responsive, culturally appropriate and accessible services to improve health and well-being outcomes for families involved in child intervention. Read the full action in detail on page 44.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #9.*

**30. Support staff in developing additional skills to better serve families with children with disabilities:** Support Family Supports for Children with Disabilities staff in providing services to families with children and youth who are engaged in high-risk behaviours. This will be achieved through staff training that focuses on practices grounded in research.

This action will help achieve equity in services and will improve health and well-being outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. Read the full action in detail on page 45.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #10.*



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## Improving our child intervention system

**31. Strengthening enduring cultural connections and stable relationships:** Develop more culturally focused practice, policy and legislation, including: developing a shared understanding of what “family” means in a multicultural society, supporting families in maintaining their cultural connections, and ensuring that children and youth have stable, enduring relationships throughout their involvement in the child intervention system, including when out-of-home placements are needed such as kinship and foster care.

This will result in children and youth having strengthened and more enduring relationships and connections with their communities and culture, including when kinship and foster caregiving is needed. Read the full action in detail on page 46.



*This action will help address panel recommendations #12 and #13.*

**32. Provide equitable funding for First Nations and Métis child intervention services:** Provide equitable funding to First Nations, both on and off reserve, and Métis communities for child intervention services.

This action will address the disparity for child protection and early intervention services for First Nations children living on reserve in Alberta. Read the full action in detail on page 47.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #23.*

**33. Improve procurement requirements to include cultural competencies:** Make changes to how Children’s Services purchases services to promote cultural competencies among contracted service providers.

This action will support children, youth and families to receive services that reflect their culture. Read the full action in detail on page 47.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #14.*

## Strengthen the child intervention workforce

**34. Improving services by increasing staffing in rural and remote communities:** Attract, recruit, and retain staff and practicum students in rural and remote communities by providing supports, education, training, developmental opportunities and incentives.

This action will support recruitment and retention of staff in rural and remote communities in the province. Read the full action in detail on page 48.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #10.*

**35. Recruit staff to reflect the population served:** Recruit and retain service delivery staff to reflect the populations served and fully implement the Indigenous recruitment strategy. This includes increasing staff exchanges, implementing the Indigenous leadership program and holding recruitment workshops with Indigenous post-secondary students.



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This action will support improved service delivery to Alberta's diverse population and enduring relationships between staff and children, youth and families. Read the full action in detail on page 48.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #18.*

**36. Better equip staff and caregivers to support families experiencing trauma:** Provide restorative-practice education and training to service-delivery staff and caregivers, including kinship and foster care, focusing on experienced as well as historical trauma and the importance of traditional Indigenous healing programs.

This action will actively engage families in meaningful ways and promote inclusiveness, family participation and collaborative decision-making. Read the full action in detail on page 49.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #15.*

**37. Increase Indigenous people's enrolment in social work programs:** Increase enrolment of Indigenous students and others in social work programs or related disciplines and align workplace competencies with post-secondary curriculums.

This action will contribute to increased child intervention program capacity and improve service delivery. Read the full action in detail on page 49.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #22.*

## Improving the child intervention system

**38. Strengthen service delivery through ongoing program evaluation:** Strengthen service delivery by evaluating programs and services and making sure health information necessary for program evaluation is available to evaluators.

This action will strengthen programs and service delivery and improve outcomes for children, youth and families. Read the full action in detail on page 50.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #25.*

**39. Better-informed decisions impacting children, youth and families:** Increase the safety and well-being of Indigenous children and youth through longitudinal research and developing strength-based outcomes and measures to inform policy and practice, and monitor cultural competency of service providers.

This will provide necessary data and information on which to base program and policy decisions. Read the full action in detail on page 50.



*This action will help address panel recommendation #26.*



Co-creating  
a positive  
future



Reconciliation



Support  
families and  
communities



Sustain  
cultural  
connections



Utilize the  
strengths of  
family and  
kinship care



Support a  
strong, stable  
workforce



Combatting  
discriminatory  
mindsets



Enabling  
the change

Appendix A:

# Detailed actions and the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention Final Recommendations

The following provides more detail on each action in the public action plan and the ministerial panel recommendation that it will address.

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #1</b></p> <p>Amend Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act Phase 1: In fall 2018, the Government of Alberta will introduce amendments to the <i>Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> that propose changes in three key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Act will incorporate a purpose and principles to ensure its intent is clear to families, communities, service delivery agents and the justice system.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) All children will be safely supported to reach their full potential.</li> <li>(ii) Principles will align with the:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</li> <li>• United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</li> <li>• Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action</li> </ul> </li> <li>(iii) Children and their families, including First Nations’ children, will receive the same levels of child intervention services, regardless of where they live in the province.</li> <li>(iv) A child’s family and culture, including diversity of child-rearing practices, will be recognized and respected.</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. The act will increase accountability and transparency, including requiring:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Clear accountability requirements for child safety and decision-making.</li> <li>(ii) Open, transparent and regular public reporting on measures of child safety and well-being.</li> <li>(iii) A review of the <i>Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> every five years.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Measurable progress requires evidence of: a review of the Act; policy revision that aligns with the Panel’s principles and recommendations; and meaningful participation in the revision of legislation and policy from Indigenous peoples and communities.</p>

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p>c. The act will support cultural connections and permanency by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Safety and connection to family, as defined, will be the primary considerations in deciding what is in the best interest of a child or youth;</li> <li>(ii) Exploring alternative options and supports for permanency in cases where it is not possible for children to be cared for by family.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #21:</b> Update the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> to ensure the act: includes a broad inclusive understanding of family, links the safety and well-being of children to cultural connectedness and diversity of child-rearing practices, removes contradictions and ensures consistency throughout the act, and clarifies the role of band designate.</p>	<p>Action #1, <i>continued</i></p>
<p><b>Action #2</b></p> <p><b>Indigenous policy, programs and services</b></p> <p>Establish three groups: an Indigenous Advisory Body with First Nations, Métis and Inuit representatives, including Indigenous caregivers, to oversee implementation and inform how an Indigenous world view can be embedded in policy and programs; an Indigenous Grandmothers' Circle to provide advice, wisdom and pass on their knowledge to inform policy affecting their communities; and a Youth Advisory Committee to provide a youth viewpoint to improve child intervention services and address issues such as community safety, health, recreation and employment.</p> <p>These groups would meet three times a year or as needed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the existing Elders Wisdom Circle to inform how implementation is jointly developed with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities.</li> <li>• Inform a monitoring and evaluation approach for implementation.</li> <li>• Ensure Indigenous world views inform the review of the <i>Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i>, and related policies and services.</li> <li>• Inform the development of programs and services that support Indigenous children and youth in care learning their language and culture, including ceremonies.</li> <li>• Address the system changes, as well as supports for survivors and communities identified through the Sixties Scoop Apology engagement.</li> <li>• Identify new opportunities for collaboration with Indigenous peoples and communities that build on the principles of self-determination.</li> </ul>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of increased Indigenous participation in developing policy and legislative processes and decision making, recognizing that First Nations participation, priorities and needed resources will vary by community.</p> <p>Measurable progress will require evidence of increased participation of Indigenous Peoples in creating and implementing their own programs and services related to the child intervention system, while recognizing that additional resources may be needed as partnerships move forward.</p>

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #2:</b> Ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous peoples — First Nation, Métis and Inuit, and experts in the development and implementation of a thorough, detailed and measurable action plan related to the Panel’s recommendations by June 30, 2018.</p> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #4:</b> Ensure First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities have opportunity and adequate resources for meaningful participation in developing culturally relevant policy and legislation to serve and care for their children.</p> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #5:</b> Collaborate with and invest in communities to enhance their capacity to self-determine the creation and implementation of programs and services.</p>	<p>Action #2, <i>continued</i></p>
<p><b>Action #3</b></p> <p><b>Increase cultural understanding and skills</b></p> <p>Allocate \$500,000 to implement an Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework to support Children’s Services staff in further gaining a cultural understanding of the populations they serve, including Indigenous children, youth and families, as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further develop and enhance the skill and knowledge of service-delivery staff, including contracted agencies, regarding the cultural understanding of the populations they serve through collaborating with Indigenous communities, post-secondary institutions, colleges and organizations to continue to provide experiential training.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #18:</b> Take action to ensure the workforce in Children’s Services — including frontline, management and contracted agencies — reflects the population served by the ministry. Recruit, train and retain staff with a culturally appropriate methodology.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of effective cultural understanding training for all staff and managers with Children’s Services, as well as targeted efforts to increase the number of Indigenous staff within the ministry. The department, along with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and Corporate Human Resources, will work together to establish targets and measures for a diverse workforce that reflects the culture of the children, youth and families served</p>

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #4</b></p> <p><b>Address racism</b></p> <p>Children’s Services will collaborate with Education and other ministries to identify commitments to address racism including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and training.</li> <li>• Engaging and collaborating with First Nations, Métis and Inuit leadership on an ongoing basis to identify ways to address racism involving their communities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #20:</b> Support Albertans, through training, education and communication, to be more knowledgeable about: Indigenous peoples, their history, and current realities of racism and discrimination, and the lasting effects of colonization on Indigenous families and its relationship to overrepresentation in the child intervention system.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of provincially available anti-racism public awareness materials and messages, as well as cultural understanding training for cross-ministry partners that is co-designed with Indigenous peoples and communities, and pre- and post-evaluation of cultural understanding and baseline data to measure public perceptions over time.</p>
<p><b>Action #5</b></p> <p><b>Support the health and well-being of children, youth and families</b></p> <p>Allocate an initial \$400,000 to jointly develop parenting, social connectedness and culturally based programs and services with Indigenous communities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding mental wellness programs.</li> <li>• Supporting programs for youth, such as summer and winter camps, self-care and art-based programs.</li> <li>• Implementing the Resiliency Framework.</li> <li>• Implementing mental wellness programs that include a whole-family approach, including blending traditional Indigenous healing practices with therapeutic services offered by the health system.</li> <li>• Working with the federal government and cross-ministry partners to provide mental health programs on reserves.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #9:</b> Mental health and addiction services must have specific responsible, culturally appropriate, accessible services for children, youth and families in the child intervention system, with a focus on expanding access (including for Albertans living in remote communities, rural areas, on and off reserve) to preventative mental health and addictions services and treatment, including secure services. The Government of Alberta should prioritize implementation of recommendations of the Valuing Mental Health report to improve services for children and families before, during and after their involvement with child intervention services</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require enhanced funding to increase access to culturally appropriate mental health and addiction services for all Albertans regardless of where they live in the province</p>

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #6</b></p> <p><b>Support self-determination and prevention and early intervention services</b></p> <p>Address social disparities by providing provincial funding, in addition to federal funding, for prevention and early intervention programs and services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocating \$2 million to promote distinct, Indigenous-led, self-determined programs and services that meet the needs of their communities, such as Indigenous programming through Parent Link Centres and on-reserve home visitation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #3:</b> Support development of partnerships and formal agreements to act on the recommendations of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Decisions on First Nations Child Welfare and Jordan’s Principle;</li> <li>» Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;</li> <li>» United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;</li> <li>» Recommendations of the Child and Youth Advocate of Alberta.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #23:</b> End the disparity in child protection and early intervention services for First Nations children living on reserve in Alberta by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Enhancing access to provincially funded, culturally relevant prevention and early intervention services.</li> <li>» Advocating for funding equity from the federal government to adhere to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and fully implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action related to improving the health and welfare of children, youth and families.</li> <li>» In the absence of federal funding for equity in child protection, end the disparity with provincial funding</li> </ul>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of meaningful partnerships and formal agreements, as well as availability of resources, whether financial, human or other, to support the development and implementation of community-specific priorities.</p> <p>Measurable progress will require evidence of resource targets and increases to committed funding — whether provincial, federal or both — to provide comparable child protection and early intervention services on First Nations reserves that are available to children, youth and families in Alberta who live off reserve.</p>



Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #7</b></p> <p><b>Fully implement Jordan’s Principle</b></p> <p>Fully implement Jordan’s Principle in Alberta to ensure that First Nations children and families receive the services they need for their healthy development through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government of Alberta supporting First Nations in advocating to the federal government and taking action when needed to help communities obtain the services needed when they need them.</li> <li>• Establishing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Government of Alberta, Government of Canada and First Nation representatives that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Processes to ensure that First Nations children, youth and families do not experience delays, denials or disruptions to education, ECD, health or social services due to jurisdictional disputes.</li> <li>» Formalized collaborative relationships through a committee whose mandate is to coordinate services for Indigenous peoples and communities and address any gaps in services.</li> <li>» Service navigation by sharing information on relevant programs and services across government.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #6:</b> Fully implement Jordan’s Principle to resolve jurisdictional disputes between Alberta and the federal government regarding payment for services to First Nations children — services that are otherwise available to all other children in the province.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence that First Nations children are receiving the services they need in a timely way, as well as increased collaboration and necessary resources between all orders of government to achieve this goal.</p>

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #8</b></p> <p><b>Increase supports for youth transitioning into adulthood</b></p> <p>The Youth Advisory Committee will connect with youth and the Indigenous advisory body, and develop concrete activities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform policy, programs and services to support youth who are receiving child intervention services successfully transition to adulthood.</li> <li>• Support youth to develop employment, budgeting and relationship-building skills.</li> <li>• Support Indigenous youth to connect to their culture.</li> <li>• Support youth connecting with the Learning Clicks Indigenous Ambassadors program to explore education and training options after high school.</li> <li>• Support youth through a mentoring program to get jobs and access post-secondary education.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #11:</b> Improve transitional supports for youth in care to adult supports and post-secondary opportunities that will help them succeed in life. This would expand supports already in place.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require enhanced resources and increased cross-ministry collaboration, as well as evidence of increased numbers of youth in care who have accessed the adult services they need and increased numbers of youth receiving needed supports to access and complete post-secondary education.</p>
<p><b>Action #9</b></p> <p><b>Increase funding for youth suicide prevention</b></p> <p>Allocate \$1 million to enhance suicide prevention programs and services for youth who are involved or at risk of becoming involved in the child intervention system by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-creating cultural programs that build relationships, deal with challenges, address early substance abuse and repair family relationships.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #9:</b> Mental health and addiction services must have specific responsible, culturally appropriate, accessible services for children, youth and families in the child intervention system, with a focus on expanding access (including for Albertans living in remote communities, rural areas, on and off reserve) to preventative mental health and addictions services and treatment, including secure services. The Government of Alberta should prioritize implementation of recommendations of the Valuing Mental Health report to improve services for children and families before, during and after their involvement in the child intervention services.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require enhanced funding to increase access to culturally appropriate mental health and addiction services for all Albertans regardless of where they live in the province.</p>

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #10</b></p> <p><b>Increase supports, training and availability of safe kinship care providers</b></p> <p>Increase the number of safe and supportive kinship care providers, including Indigenous providers, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piloting a holistic, in-depth assessment process that includes consideration of the unique placement needs of the child, the unique dynamics of being a kinship care provider and the types of supports that may be needed for safety and well-being of the child.</li> <li>• Recruiting kinship placements that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ensure the safety, well-being and the unique placement needs of children, including utilizing Indigenous advisers where feasible to help ensure that homes are safe.</li> <li>» Include caregivers who will support meaningful cultural, religious and community connections.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #16:</b> Strengthen kinship care assessment and ensure that appropriate training and supports are in place for kinship care providers. Prioritize kinship placements, in line with best practice, to support both safety and well-being.</p>	<p>Measurable progress on a strengthened kinship care approach will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of enhanced and strengthened policies and practices, including assessment to support the safety and well-being of children in kinship homes.</li> <li>• Evidence of enhanced training and resources for kinship providers.</li> <li>• Culturally appropriate, evidence-based methods are in place to gather kinship caregiver input and measure safety and well-being outcomes of children in kinship homes</li> </ul>

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #11</b></p> <p><b>Kinship care providers have the supports for the well-being of children and youth</b></p> <p>Strengthen the kinship care program through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing personal, emotional, financial, child- or family-related resources that the caregiver may need to provide for the safety and well-being of the child.</li> <li>• Revising the financial compensation model.</li> <li>• Providing dedicated caseworkers and training to ensure caregivers have support when they need it.</li> <li>• Providing opportunities for cultural experiences to support the child’s connectedness to their family and community.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #16:</b> Strengthen kinship care assessment and ensure that appropriate training and supports are in place for kinship care providers. Prioritize kinship placements, in line with best practice, to support both safety and well-being.</p>	<p>Measurable progress on a strengthened kinship care approach will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of enhanced and strengthened policies and practices, including assessment to support the safety and well-being of children in kinship homes.</li> <li>• Evidence of enhanced training and resources for kinship providers.</li> <li>• Culturally appropriate, evidence-based methods are in place to gather kinship caregiver input and measure safety and well-being outcomes of children in kinship homes.</li> </ul>

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #12</b></p> <p><b>Supporting Indigenous children, youth and families: Band Designate role</b></p> <p>Allocate \$400,000 to clarify the First Nation Band Designate role and establish a funding model that supports the delivery of Indigenous child intervention services.</p> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #4:</b> Ensure First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities have opportunity and adequate resources for meaningful participation in developing culturally relevant policy and legislation to serve and care for their children.</p> <p>Taking action on Recommendation #5: Collaborate with and invest in communities to enhance their capacity to self-determine the creation and implementation of programs and services.</p> <p>Taking action on Recommendation #21: Update the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> to ensure the act: includes a broad inclusive understanding of family, links the safety and well-being of children to cultural connectedness and diversity of child-rearing practices, removes contradictions and ensures consistency throughout the act and clarifies the role of Band Designate.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of increased Indigenous participation in developing policy and legislative processes and decision-making with recognition that First Nation participation, priorities and needed resources will vary by community.</p> <p>Measurable progress will require evidence of increased participation of Indigenous peoples in creating and implementing their own programs and services related to the child intervention system, while recognizing that additional resources may be needed as partnerships move forward.</p> <p>Measurable progress requires evidence of: a review of the act, policy revisions that align with the panel's principles and recommendations, and meaningful participation in the revision of legislation and policy from Indigenous peoples and communities</p>

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #13</b></p> <p><b>Support Alberta’s Child Advocacy Centres to reduce child abuse and neglect</b></p> <p>Establish a funding model for Alberta’s seven Child Advocacy Centres through partnerships between the Government of Alberta and service providers to support the work to reduce child abuse and neglect.</p> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #10:</b> Achieve equity in services to support the health and well-being of children receiving child intervention services, regardless of where they live in Alberta, including children with disabilities and complex needs. Strategies to encourage recruitment and retention of staff in rural and remote regions should be pursued. This would include equity of services between child intervention families and those receiving Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD).</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of targeted efforts to recruit and retain staff in rural and remote areas and improve rates of staff retention, and evidence that children with disabilities and complex needs within the child intervention system are receiving the same level and types of resources and supports as those in FSCD.</p>
<p><b>Action #14</b></p> <p><b>Empower the voices of children, youth and families to drive continuous improvement</b></p> <p>Pilot a new and ongoing client feedback, monitoring and reporting system that incorporates the voice of children, youth, families and kinship and foster caregivers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuously improve the child intervention system, including improvements to policy, kinship and foster care, and service delivery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #17:</b> Use diverse, culturally relevant collection methods to understand the experiences of all children, youth and families served to directly inform improvements to the quality of the child intervention system.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require the creation of findings of an ongoing research project that gathers feedback about the experiences of all families who come to the attention of the child intervention system. This will require the development of a culturally appropriate research methodology.</p>

Immediate Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #15</b></p> <p><b>Support Indigenous-led research</b></p> <p>Establish and fund an Indigenous Research Committee that includes Indigenous scholars, researchers and funders, as well as representatives from institutions, First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities, with a mandate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen and support Indigenous-led and community-based research.</li> <li>• Use Indigenous methodologies for research.</li> <li>• Compile an inventory of research underway or completed, and provide access to researchers and the public.</li> <li>• Address barriers and research gaps in supporting and completing research affecting Indigenous communities.</li> <li>• Increase understanding of how to apply the Indigenous world view to policy, programs and family and community wellness.</li> <li>• Inform policy and programs such as effective prevention and early intervention programs that address the needs of at-risk groups.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #24:</b> The Government of Alberta will collaborate with Indigenous peoples and communities on Indigenous-led, collaborative research in alignment with First Nation principles of OCAP (ownership, control, access and possession) by Indigenous communities. This research will include evaluating and informing child intervention policies and practices. Research funders will be encouraged to offer grants to prioritized projects in support of this recommendation.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of the Government of Alberta's participation in community-based, Indigenous-led applied research partnerships that will enhance the quality and safety of care of children in the intervention system; and adopt and align research projects to the principles of First Nation OCAP.</p>
<p><b>Action #16</b></p> <p><b>Improve workplace culture</b></p> <p>Improve workplace culture, engagement and retention of staff by providing opportunities for peer support through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnering with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees.</li> <li>• Establishing and evaluating a peer-support program, including an Indigenous Support Network to access Elders and cultural ceremonies such as smudges that would provide employees with one-on-one support and could be used following traumatic and emotional events.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #19:</b> Undertake a formal review of the child intervention workplace with consultants chosen by management, employees and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, and examine the need for more peer-support opportunities.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require completion of the workplace review within 12 months, monitoring of the effectiveness of a peer-support program, mentorship and other actions that result from the review, and making timely adjustments as required.</p>

Completed Actions	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Release of measurable indicators for recommendations</b></p> <p>In March 2018, the measurable indicators and recommendations were publicly released.</p> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #1:</b> Ensure Children’s Services applies specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely criteria to all the panel recommendations within six weeks and send revised recommendations to the expert panel members for review, final ratification and public release.</p>	
<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Meaningful Indigenous participation in the Public Action Plan</b></p> <p>This public action plan was jointly developed with Indigenous leaders and communities, and stakeholders through meetings of the Minister of Children’s Services with the Chiefs of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Stoney Nation and Tsuut’ina Nation, the Confederacy of Treaty 6 and 8 First Nations, and the Métis Nation of Alberta and Métis Settlements General Council leadership. Focused engagement sessions were held across the province, including with Indigenous communities in Big Stone Cree Nation, Paul First Nation and Piikani First Nation, to solicit a range of perspectives.</p> <p>Participants included ministry staff, stakeholders, agencies and service delivery organizations, First Nation Band Designates, Delegated First Nations Agency directors, Band managers, Settlement administrators, Indigenous groups, Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention presenters, subject matter experts, cross-ministry partners, Indigenous communities and universities and colleges with social work programs.</p> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #2:</b> Ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous peoples — First Nation, Métis and Inuit, and experts in the development and implementation of a thorough, detailed and measurable action plan related to the panel’s recommendations by June 30, 2018.</p>	



**Action #17****Supporting children, youth and families through mentoring**

Support culturally relevant mentoring and peer-support models and resources in Indigenous communities by:

- Providing mentors with ongoing culturally based training and support, such as access to Elders.
- Co-creating long-term, community-based support relationship networks for children, youth and families, such as peer grief support and peer parent support programs.

**Taking action on Recommendation #7:** Work with Indigenous communities to provide community-based historic trauma healing services which include access to ceremony and cultural healing.

**Taking action on Recommendation #15:** Adopt a methodology of restorative practice to promote family participation in decisions that affect them, including family assessment, case planning and child placement

Measurable progress will require evidence of new or enhanced trauma-informed, community-based services that include access to ceremony, culture and healing that are led by Indigenous organizations and communities, in partnership with the Government of Alberta.

Measurable progress will require evidence of increased collaboration with, and participation of, families in decisions that affect them using restorative practices, particularly those related to assessment, case planning and child placement.

Short-Term Actions: Completed by 2020	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #18</b></p> <p><b>Help families heal from trauma</b></p> <p>Improve trauma-informed programs and services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing Indigenous-developed, holistic, trauma-informed healing centres to address historical trauma that become the preferred treatment approach for Indigenous peoples.</li> <li>• Increasing cultural circle-based family and group conferencing.</li> <li>• Co-creating program demonstration sites for community-driven prevention models that include traditional Indigenous emotional healing models.</li> <li>• Supporting urban Indigenous organizations and communities as ceremonial trauma-healing places to host ceremonies.</li> <li>• Compensating Elders for supports and services to communities (e.g., leading healing ceremonies).</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #7:</b> Work with Indigenous communities to provide community-based historic trauma healing services, which include access to ceremony and cultural healing.</p> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #15:</b> Adopt a methodology of restorative practice to promote family participation in decisions that affect them, including family assessment, case planning and child placement.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of new or enhanced trauma-informed, community-based services that include access to ceremony, culture and healing that are led by Indigenous organizations and communities, in partnership with the Government of Alberta.</p> <p>Measurable progress will require evidence of increased collaboration with, and participation of, families in decisions that affect them using restorative practices, particularly those related to assessment, case planning and child placement.</p>
<p><b>Action #19</b></p> <p><b>Amend the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> - Phase 2</b></p> <p>As part of a multi-phase review, Children’s Services will implement amendments to the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> by fall 2019, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarifying the First Nation Band Designate role.</li> <li>• Exploring alternative permanency options and other provisions that may be needed to further implement the panel recommendations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #21:</b> Update the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> to ensure the act: includes a broad inclusive understanding of family, links the safety and well-being of children to cultural connectedness and diversity of child-rearing practices, removes contradictions and ensures consistency throughout the act, and clarifies the role of Band Designate</p>	<p>Measurable progress requires evidence of: a review of the act, policy revisions that align with the panel’s principles and recommendations and meaningful participation in the revision of legislation and policy from Indigenous peoples and communities.</p>

Short-Term Actions: Completed by 2020	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #20</b></p> <p><b>Increase family involvement in decision-making</b></p> <p>Increase early and ongoing participation of Indigenous peoples and families in all critical decision points in the child intervention system, including family involvement in placements such as kinship and foster care.</p> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #15:</b> Adopt a methodology of restorative practice to promote family participation in decisions that affect them, including family assessment, case planning and child placement.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of increased collaboration with, and participation of, families in decisions that affect them using restorative practices, particularly those related to assessment, case planning and child placement.</p>
<p><b>Action #21</b></p> <p><b>Support the healthy development of children and youth with complex needs</b></p> <p>Increase available placement options for children and youth with complex needs through obtaining therapeutic, out-of-home care services and re-organizing existing services across the province that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support their healthy development.</li> <li>• Holistically address their unique challenges.</li> <li>• Respect and reflect their culture, language and spirituality.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #10:</b> Achieve equity in services to support the health and well-being of children receiving child intervention services regardless of where they live in Alberta, including children with disabilities and complex needs. Strategies to encourage recruitment and retention of staff in rural and remote regions should be pursued. This would include equity of services between child intervention families and those receiving Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD).</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require: evidence of targeted efforts to recruit and retain staff in rural and remote areas and improve rates of staff retention, and evidence that children with disabilities and complex needs within the child intervention system are receiving the same level and types of resources and supports as those in FSCD.</p>

**Action #22****Improve service delivery for children and youth with disabilities and their families**

Strengthen service delivery for children and youth with disabilities — and their families — who are also receiving child intervention services by:

- Requiring increased collaborative case planning between the Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) and child intervention programs, and reinforcing this through a cross-ministry protocol.
- Supporting youth transitioning to adulthood.
- Removing barriers to accessing disability services in collaboration with families and communities.

**Taking action on Recommendation #10:** Achieve equity in services to support the health and well-being of children receiving child intervention services regardless of where they live, including children with disabilities and complex needs. Strategies to encourage recruitment and retention of staff in rural and remote regions should be pursued. This would include equity of services between child intervention families and those receiving Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD).

Measurable progress will require: evidence of targeted efforts to recruit and retain staff in rural and remote areas and improve rates of staff retention, and evidence that children with disabilities and complex needs within the child intervention system are receiving the same level and types of resources and supports as those in FSCD.

**Action #23****Increasing mental health and addiction services**

Improve services for children, youth and families prior to and throughout child intervention involvement by:

- Children's Services further collaborating with Health and service-delivery partners to prioritize implementation of the *Valuing Mental Health* report recommendations, including:
  - » Providing the same level of services to youth whether they live in their family home or need out-of-home care such as kinship or foster care, or when they need to access treatment or secure services.
  - » Providing increased treatment beds in rural and urban communities that are immediately available for children and youth with complex needs.
  - » Developing culturally appropriate trauma-informed services for high-risk children, youth and families; for example, counselling and therapeutic services that are responsive and immediately available.
- Increasing family and service providers' understanding of the emotional impact of trauma and services available in their communities through education and training.

**Taking action on Recommendation #9:** Mental health and addiction services must have specific responsible, culturally appropriate, accessible services for children, youth and families in the child intervention system, with a focus on expanding access (including for Albertans living in remote communities, rural areas, on and off reserve) to preventative mental health and addictions services and treatment, including secure services. The Government of Alberta should prioritize implementation of recommendations of the *Valuing Mental Health* report to improve services for children and families before, during and after their involvement in child intervention services.

Measurable progress will require enhanced funding to increase access to culturally appropriate mental health and addiction services for all Albertans regardless of where they live in the province.

Short-Term Actions: Completed by 2020	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #24</b></p> <p><b>Improve post-secondary opportunities for youth involved in the child intervention system</b></p> <p>Provide more opportunities and resources for youth involved in the child intervention system to pursue post-secondary education. This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving access to the Advancing Futures Bursary program by reviewing eligibility criteria, including age and time in care.</li> <li>• Increasing participation in the Advancing Futures Bursary program by 20 per cent per year over the next five years.</li> <li>• Increasing awareness, access and opportunities for youth to continue their education, career training and post-secondary education.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #11:</b> Improve transitional supports for youth in care to adult supports and post-secondary opportunities that will help them succeed in life. This would expand upon supports already in place.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require enhanced resources and increased cross-ministry collaboration, as well as evidence of increased numbers of youth in care who have accessed the adult services they need and increased numbers of youth receiving needed supports to access and complete post-secondary education.</p>

**Action #25****Develop services that reflect the culture, language and spirituality of those served**

Increase the cultural understanding and competency of service delivery staff, including contracted agencies and out-of-home placements such as kinship and foster care, to connect Indigenous children, youth and families with their culture by:

- Providing training, information and experiential learning opportunities.
- Embedding Indigenous cultural competency requirements, standards, learning opportunities, evaluation, monitoring and measuring outcomes and guidelines into the procurement process for programs and services.
- Developing cultural tools, programs and resources such as community and cultural connector roles that will enhance connections between children and families and their and culture.
- Creating a cultural community of practice that focuses on competencies for service delivery staff.
- Working with Indigenous peoples and communities to develop and deliver their own programs and services.

**Taking action on Recommendation #14:** Require contracted agencies to provide services that respect and reflect the culture, language, and spirituality of the people they serve.

Measurable progress will require evidence that contractors consistently provide services that respect and reflect the culture, language and spirituality of those served. This may require changes to the procurement process, additional monitoring and expanded cultural training for contracted service providers.

Long-Term Actions: Completed by 2022	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #26</b></p> <p><b>Amend the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i>: Phase 3</b></p> <p>Complete an all-party review of <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> by the fall of 2021 and identify other amendments that may be needed.</p> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #21:</b> Update the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> to ensure the act: includes a broad inclusive understanding of family, links the safety and well-being of children to cultural connectedness and diversity of child-rearing practices, removes contradictions and ensures consistency throughout the act and clarifies the role of Band Designate.</p>	<p>Measurable progress requires evidence of: a review of the act, policy revisions that align with the panel’s principles and recommendations, and meaningful participation in the revision of legislation and policy from Indigenous peoples and communities.</p>



**Action #27**

**Develop a foundation to inform policy and services impacting Indigenous peoples**

Develop partnerships and agreements between the Government of Alberta, the Government of Canada, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities to support Indigenous self-determination through:

- Increasing resources by the Government of Alberta collaborating with First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and communities to advocate and appeal to the federal government through establishing additional structures such as:
  - » Treaty 8 Protocol Agreement Women and Children Table.
  - » Blackfoot Confederacy Protocol Agreement.
  - » Child and Family Services Tri-lateral Engagement Process.
  - » Métis Nation of Alberta’s formal engagement process.
- Addressing discrimination and historical injustices through activities such as the apology to Sixties Scoop survivors.
- Improving family and cultural connections for children and youth requiring out-of-home care.
- Completing Indigenous-led research and evaluation processes.
- Developing Indigenous programs and services such as:
  - » A reunification home developed by Bigstone Cree Nation’s Pekewe Services Society.
  - » The establishment of the Nations of Treaty 8 Child and Family Services Urban Office.

**Taking action on Recommendation #3:** Support development of partnerships and formal agreements to act on the recommendations of the:

- » Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decisions on First Nations child welfare
- » Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- » United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- » Recommendations of the Child and Youth Advocate of Alberta

Measurable progress will require evidence of meaningful partnerships and formal agreements, as well as availability of resources, whether financial, human or other, to support the development and implementation of community-specific priorities.

**Action #28**

**Improving prevention and early intervention supports**

Improve prevention and early intervention services through:

- Mandating and increasing accountability for a coordinated and transparent cross-ministry service delivery for prevention and early intervention programs and services, including:
  - » Developing a streamlined funding model that is supported by both federal and provincial monies.
  - » Providing funding to establish and measure outcomes and indicators of success including:
- Safety and wellness measures.
- On-reserve services addressing risk behaviours and protective factors for youth and families.
- Reducing social disparities for Indigenous peoples and new Canadians (e.g. poverty-reduction strategies).
- Reducing barriers to access recreational opportunities.
- Increasing access to culturally relevant mentoring programs.
- Increasing prevention-related programming for young men and boys.
- Providing additional supports for pregnant and parenting teens.
- Providing community-based programs to reduce poverty.
  - » Increasing the amount and timely access to specialized services for children and youth with complex needs, including the ability to share information.
- Addressing disparity between on- and off-reserve services by increasing on-reserve programs and services related to addictions, mental health, respite services, family violence and parenting skills resources for:
  - » Community-led, self-determined programs and services similar to Family and Community Supports Services Program that is currently available to municipalities and Métis Settlements.
  - » On-reserve Parent Link Centres.
  - » Home Visitation programming for Indigenous families.

Measurable progress on addressing root cause issues will require the Government of Alberta to set cross-ministry priorities, mobilize resources, evaluate and measure progress on strategies and initiatives, and build on existing efforts where appropriate.

Measurable progress will require evidence of resource targets and increases to committed funding — whether provincial, federal or both — to provide comparable child protection and early intervention services on First Nations reserves that are available to children, youth and families in Alberta who live off reserve.

Long-Term Actions: Completed by 2022	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #8:</b> The Government of Alberta, in collaboration with its service-delivery partners, to continue to act on addressing root causes for child-intervention involvement, including: direct, long-term poverty-reduction strategies, family violence prevention and access to meaningful, culturally congruent family supports.</p> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #23:</b> End the disparity in child protection and early intervention services for First Nations children living on reserve in Alberta by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Enhancing access to provincially funded, culturally relevant prevention and early intervention services.</li> <li>» Advocating for funding equity from the federal government to adhere to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and fully implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action related to improving the health and welfare of children, youth and families.</li> <li>» In the absence of federal funding for equity in child protection, end the disparity with provincial funding.</li> </ul>	

**Action #29**

**Increase access to trauma-informed supports and treatments**

Increase access to trauma-informed treatment and supports for children, youth and families, and caregivers, including kinship and foster care and service delivery staff through:

- Designating regional and community-based navigators to support immediate access to services.
- Providing training for staff and caregivers to develop additional skills and knowledge to identify mental health and addiction issues.
- Providing child care and transportation to support parents accessing treatment programs.
- Developing and extending peer-support programs for families receiving child intervention services who may also be experiencing mental health or addiction issues.

**Taking action on Recommendation #9:** Mental health and addiction services must have specific responsible, culturally appropriate, accessible services for children, youth and families in the child intervention system, with a focus on expanding access (including for Albertans living in remote communities, rural areas, on and off reserve) to preventative mental health and addictions services and treatment, including secure services. The Government of Alberta should prioritize implementation of recommendations of the *Valuing Mental Health* report to improve services for children and families before, during and after their involvement in child intervention services.

Measurable progress will require enhanced funding to increase access to culturally appropriate mental health and addiction services for all Albertans regardless of where they live in the province.

**Action #30**

**Support staff in developing additional skills to better serve families with children and youth with disabilities**

Assist children and youth with disabilities who are engaging in high-risk behaviours by supporting Family Supports for Children with Disabilities staff in developing a practice framework that:

- Incorporates training and practices grounded in research.
- Aligns practice to the principles guiding child intervention services to ensure consistency in working with families.
- Removes barriers and clarifies policy requirements for good practice.

**Taking action on Recommendation #10:** Achieve equity in services to support the health and well-being of children receiving child intervention services regardless of where they live in Alberta, including children with disabilities and complex needs. Strategies to encourage recruitment and retention of staff in rural and remote regions should be pursued. This would include equity of services between child intervention families and those receiving Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD).

Measurable progress will require evidence of targeted efforts to recruit and retain staff in rural and remote areas and improve rates of staff retention, and evidence that children with disabilities and complex needs within the child intervention system are receiving the same level and types of resources and supports as those in FSCD.

**Action #31**

**Strengthening enduring cultural connections and stable relationships**

Develop more culturally focused practice, policy, legislation and programs through aligning and revising the Child Intervention Practice Framework with the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* to ensure:

- o Children receive equity of services regardless of where they live.
- o Diverse child-rearing practices are respected and an inclusive definition of family is provided.
- o Children develop and maintain cultural connections and stable, enduring relationships and long-term placement stability.
- o A cultural plan for children and youth is applied throughout their involvement in the child intervention system, and results in strengthened foster caregiving, enduring kinship relationships and connections with their families and culture.

**Taking action on Recommendation #12:** Ensure policies and practices for family assessment, case planning and child placement are culturally relevant to families, and serve to strengthen connection to families, kinship and community. Where changes are required, policies and practices must:

- » Be reframed to reflect an Indigenous world view.
- » Include opportunities for children to learn language and cultural practices.

**Taking action on Recommendation #13:** In cases when it is not possible for a child to be cared for by family, extended family or community, ensure children are provided with opportunities for meaningful and demonstrable cultural and kinship connections and enduring relationships in stable, permanent homes.

**Taking action on Recommendation #15:** Adopt a methodology of restorative practice to promote family participation in decisions that affect them, including family assessment, case planning and child placement.

Measurable progress will require evidence of changes to child intervention policies and practices to reflect an Indigenous world view, as defined through active participation from Indigenous peoples and communities, as well as an increase in the numbers of children and youth learning their language(s) and cultural practices.

Measurable progress requires resources, supports and training to support children in stable, permanent homes with enduring relationships, including meaningful connections to community and kin, as well as developing and tracking measures of success around children’s safety and well-being.

Measurable progress will require evidence of increased collaboration with, and participation of, families in decisions that affect them using restorative practices, particularly those related to assessment, case planning and child placement.

**Action #32**

**Provide equitable funding for First Nations and Métis child interventions services**

Provide equitable funding to First Nations communities both on and off reserve, and Métis and Inuit peoples and communities, through:

- The Government of Alberta partnering and collaborating with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities to advocate and appeal to the Government of Canada to comply with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling.
- Supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities to access federal funding opportunities.
- Providing equitable funding opportunities, following an analysis of federal child welfare funding provided to First Nations in Alberta.

**Taking action on Recommendation #23:** End the disparity in child protection and early intervention services for First Nations children living on reserve in Alberta by:

- » Enhancing access to provincially funded, culturally relevant prevention and early intervention services.
- » Advocating for funding equity from the federal government to adhere to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and fully implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations related to improving the health and welfare of children, youth and families.
- » In the absence of federal funding for equity in child protection, end the disparity with provincial funding.

Measurable progress will require evidence of resource targets and increases to committed funding — whether provincial, federal or both — to provide comparable child protection and early intervention services on First Nations reserves that are available to children, youth and families in Alberta who live off reserve.

**Action #33**

**Improve procurement requirements to include cultural competencies**

Change procurement to ensure service providers have the cultural competencies reflecting those served, including:

- Terms and conditions in contracts that reflect the culture, language, and spirituality of the people being served.
- Provisions in contracts for remuneration for cultural services.
- Requirements for robust Indigenous cultural services in competitive procurements.

**Taking action on Recommendation #14:** Require contracted agencies to provide services that respect and reflect the culture, language, and spirituality of the people they serve.

Measurable progress will require evidence that contractors consistently provide services that respect and reflect the culture, language and spirituality of those served. This may require changes to the procurement process, additional monitoring and expanded cultural training for contracted service providers.

**Action #34**

**Improving services through increasing staffing in rural and remote communities**

Attract, recruit and retain staff and practicum students in rural and remote communities through:

- Strengthening and providing a consistent orientation and “onboarding” experience that guides and supports staff and their families who may be adapting to a new community.
- Working with Advanced Education to train and educate staff in rural and remote communities where they live.
- Improving access to supports, resources and development opportunities comparable to those provided in urban areas.
- Providing targeted incentives such as housing supports.

**Taking action on Recommendation #10:** Achieve equity in services to support the health and well-being of children receiving child intervention services regardless of where they live in Alberta, including children with disabilities and complex needs. Strategies to encourage recruitment and retention of staff in rural and remote regions should be pursued. This would include equity of services between child intervention families and those receiving Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD).

Measurable progress will require: evidence of targeted efforts to recruit and retain staff in rural and remote areas and improve rates of staff retention and evidence that children with disabilities and complex needs within the child intervention system are receiving the same level and types of resources and supports as those in FSCD.

**Action #35**

**Recruit staff to reflect the population served**

Recruit and retain service delivery staff to reflect the populations served and fully implement the Indigenous recruitment strategy to:

- **Increase staff exchanges:** Create a deeper cultural understanding and shared practices through staff exchanges between Children’s Services, Delegated First Nations Agencies and Métis Settlements.
- **Implement the Indigenous leadership program:** Increase Indigenous staff throughout Children’s Services and agencies by creating developmental opportunities to better compete for leadership positions.
- **Implement recruitment workshops with Indigenous post-secondary students:** Make Children’s Services an employer of choice through targeting recruitment to be more culturally reflective and appealing to Indigenous candidates, such as incorporating cultural practices in all parts of the process and providing “practice interviews.”

**Taking action on Recommendation #18:** Take action to ensure the workforce in Children’s Services — including frontline, management and contracted agencies — reflects the population served by the ministry. Recruit, train and retain staff with a culturally appropriate methodology.

Measurable progress will require evidence of effective cultural understanding training for all staff and managers with Children’s Services, as well as targeted efforts to increase the number of Indigenous staff within the ministry. The department, along with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and Corporate Human Resources, will work together to establish targets and measures for a diverse workforce that reflects the culture of the children, youth and families served.



Long-Term Actions: Completed by 2022	Measurable progress identified by panel
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**Action #36**

**Better equip staff and caregivers to support families experiencing trauma**

Provide restorative-practice education and training to service delivery staff and caregivers, including kinship and foster care, specifically focusing on:

- Profound and lasting effects of experienced as well as historical trauma on the health and well-being of individuals and families, including Indigenous peoples.
- Impact of trauma and its effect on the developing brains of children.
- The importance of accessing and acknowledging traditional programs as the most effective way for Indigenous peoples to heal.

**Taking action on Recommendation #15:** Adopt a methodology of restorative practice to promote family participation in decisions that affect them, including family assessment, case planning and child placement.

Measurable progress will require evidence of increased collaboration with, and participation of, families in decisions that affect them using restorative practices, particularly those related to assessment, case planning and child placement.

**Action #37**

**Increase Indigenous people’s enrolment in social work programs**

Increase enrolment of Indigenous students and others to access social work programs, or related disciplines, by partnering with Advanced Education, professional organizations and Indigenous post-secondary institutions. This action will be achieved by:

- Evaluating current levels of enrolment, completion and graduate outcomes in designated post-secondary programs.
- Aligning workplace competencies with curriculum and include skill development around prevention, early intervention and child intervention.
- Identify alternative models of social work program delivery in rural and remote communities.

**Taking action on Recommendation #22:** Increase the post-secondary application, admissions and completion rates of Indigenous students in social work and related disciplines by working with Indigenous peoples, communities and post-secondary institutions to increase child intervention program capacity and improve program delivery.

Measurable progress will require enhanced collaboration with post-secondary institutions and cross-ministry partners to develop explicit strategies with targets and measures to attract, admit and support more Indigenous students to complete post-secondary programs in social work and related disciplines.

Long-Term Actions: Completed by 2022	Measurable progress identified by panel
<p><b>Action #38</b></p> <p><b>Strengthen service delivery through ongoing program evaluation</b></p> <p>Strengthen service delivery by evaluating programs and services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healing and resiliency in prevention models.</li> <li>• Financial Assistance Agreements for young adults aged 18-24 years who were previously in care.</li> <li>• Kinship care programs and support to caregivers.</li> <li>• Child intervention practice, including guiding principles of the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i>.</li> <li>• Ensuring responsive sharing of necessary health information through establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with Health.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #25:</b> The Government of Alberta will support and use research on emerging practice and policy to determine the relative merit and impact of interventions over time and identify future directions and alternative approaches.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of ways that research is used to inform policy, alternative practice approaches and ongoing quality assurance.</p>
<p><b>Action #39</b></p> <p><b>Better-informed decisions impacting children, youth and families</b></p> <p>Increase the safety and well-being of Indigenous children and youth in care through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing a longitudinal research study.</li> <li>• Developing strength-based outcomes and measures that will inform policy and practice.</li> <li>• Working with Indigenous people to measure the cultural competencies of service delivery staff, including contracted agencies.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taking action on Recommendation #26:</b> Conduct and use longitudinal research on short- and long-term outcomes associated with children who come to the attention of the child intervention system to inform decisions and improve future outcomes for children, youth and families.</p>	<p>Measurable progress will require evidence of collaboration, processes with Indigenous and child intervention experts to develop and implement a clear methodology with benchmarks and timelines related to longitudinal research, as well as evidence of its use throughout policy development.</p>

## Appendix B: Measuring our progress

This public action plan is intended to strengthen the child intervention system and improve supports for children, youth and families. The following is a starting point to continue working with First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples and communities in developing measures to evaluate the success of this action plan and, more importantly, to monitor outcomes for the safety and well-being of children, youth and families. In addition, baseline measures will be developed for those areas not currently tracked, including improved access to prevention and early intervention programs and services, children, youth and families' safety, well-being, and cultural connectedness.

Children's Services will monitor ongoing progress on the measures outlined below.

- a. **Desired shift or outcome:** Indigenous world view is more fully integrated into child intervention legislation, policy, practice, research and evaluation

This will be measured by establishing the following:

- Indigenous Advisory Body to inform implementation of the Action Plan including tracking progress, monitoring and evaluation, and further informing the development of outcomes and measures.
- Indigenous Grandmothers' Circle to provide advice, wisdom and knowledge to inform policy, programs and services.
- Youth Advisory Committee to provide a youth viewpoint to inform policy, programs and services.
- Indigenous Research Committee to use Indigenous methodologies for research and inform policy and programs.

These measures are linked to actions #1-2, 4-6, 12, 14-15, 17-19, 26-28, 39.

- b. **Desired shift or outcome:** Children, youth and families have improved access to prevention and early intervention programs and services that are culturally relevant and include Indigenous world views.

This will be measured through:

- Percentage increase in the number of students approved for Advancing Futures Bursary.
- Percentage of Advancing Futures Bursary youth who completed their program of study.
- Establish baseline and measures focused on culturally appropriate prevention and early intervention programs serving communities across Alberta.

These measures are linked to actions #5-6, 8-9, 17, 23-24, 29.

c. **Desired shift or outcome:** Service equity is achieved on and off reserve.

This will be measured through:

- Percentage of Jordan's Principle requests assessed within 48 hours or less.
- Identification of the gap in social disparity and equity both on and off reserve through working with the Indigenous Research Committee.

This measure is linked to actions #6-7, 28, 32.

d. **Desired shift or outcome:** Children and youth involved in child intervention are safe and healthy.

This will be measured through:

- Percentage of children and youth urgently responded to by caseworkers when concerns arose about their immediate safety.
- Percentage of children and youth, including Indigenous, with a new child intervention file who did not have a file closure in the previous 12 months.
- There was contact between the caseworker and the caregiver, including kinship and foster care, specific to the child's well-being as reflected in the case plan a minimum of once every three months.
- Percentage of children and youth, including Indigenous, receiving face-to-face contact with their caseworker every three months.
- A new and ongoing client feedback, monitoring and reporting system developed that includes the voices of children, youth, families and kinship and foster caregivers to continuously improve the child intervention system from policy to service delivery.

These measures are linked to actions #1, 10, 12-13, 18-19, 26, 28.

e. **Desired shift or outcome:** Children and youth involved with child intervention have strengthened connections with their kin, communities and cultures.

This will be measured through:

- Percentage of children and youth, including Indigenous, with an active service plan that reflects culturally appropriate connections.
- Percentage of Indigenous children in kinship or foster care who are placed with Indigenous families.
- Percentage of kinship caregivers as a total of all Indigenous and non-Indigenous care providers.
- Percentage of foster caregivers who identify that they have the right supports to actively maintain a child's culture and connections.

This measure is linked to actions #2, 12, 17-18, 31.

- f. **Desired shift or outcome:** Government of Alberta and contracted agency staff provide services culturally aligned to the population served.

This will be measured through:

- Percentage of Children’s Services staff that have completed Indigenous awareness training under the Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework to enhance their work with Indigenous children, youth and families.
- Indigenous cultural competency requirements, standards, outcomes and measures are included in the procurement process for contracted agencies.

This measure is linked to actions #3-4, 21, 25, 33, 35-37.

- g. **Desired shift or outcome:** Children and youth have increased access to safe, stable and long-term homes.

This will be measured through:

- Percentage of children and youth, including those who are Indigenous, returned home after being temporarily placed away from their families.
- Percentage of children and youth, including those who are Indigenous, in out-of-home care are placed in stable, long-term homes.
- Length of time it takes for a child or youth, including those who are Indigenous, to be reunited with their family or kin.

These measures are linked to action #20.

- h. **Desired shift or outcome:** Kinship caregivers receive improved support to provide for the health and well-being of children who need out-of-home care

This will be measured through:

- Percentage of Indigenous children placed in safe and supportive kinship homes.
- Percentage of kinship caregivers who feel that they have the right supports to be successful.
- Percentage of Indigenous children in kinship or foster care who are placed with Indigenous families.
- Percentage of kinship care providers as a total of all care providers including Indigenous, and non-Indigenous.

These measures are linked to actions #10-11, 20.

- i. Desired shift or outcome: Service delivery staff in Children’s Services receives increased workplace support.

This will be measured through:

- Reduced staff absenteeism and turnover in the Children’s Services service delivery, including in rural areas of the province.
- An increase in positive staff response rate for Employee Engagement drivers in the Employee Engagement Survey, including employees feeling supported to provide a high level of service, being treated respectfully at work, being able to balance work and personal life, and having positive working relationships with co-workers.

This measure is linked to action #16.