

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**  
**Children’s Services 2018-19 Annual Report**  
**Follow up Questions and Responses**

**Question 1: PA-269**

Ms Renaud

**Of the 2,500 front-line positions specifically working in child intervention, can you tell me what percentage are indigenous, what percentage of the FTEs?**

Response:

- Employees are not required to disclose personal information regarding their race, ethnicity, or place of origin. During the most recent Employee Engagement Survey completed in 2018, employees were provided with the opportunity to voluntarily disclose diversity groups to which they belong. 1,700 (59%) of Children’s Services employees completed the survey, and of these, 175 (10.29%) identified as Indigenous.

**Question 2: PA-274**

Ms Pancholi

**On page 9 of the annual report it references the growth in the number of child care programs, that in 2018-2019 it grew by 4.6 per cent from the year prior. Do you have a sense of how many of those new programs were offered by the variety of operators: private, nonprofit, day homes? Those new programs: do you know where they grew?**

Response:

- Throughout the year, multiple programs open and close. The 124 program count is the net growth when comparing two data points: March 2018 vs. March 2019.
- The growth of child care programs between 2017-18 and 2018-19 occurred across a variety of program types. Day care centres (84) and out of school centres (62) were the primary drivers of these increases.

Program Type	2017-2018	2018-2019	Program Change	% Change
DAY CARE PROGRAM	902	986	84	9.3%
FAMILY DAY HOME	67	66	-1	-1.5%
GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE	7	9	2	28.6%
INNOVATIVE CHILD CARE PROGRAM	22	23	1	4.5%
OUT OF SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM	1,017	1,079	62	6.1%
PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM	695	671	-24	-3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,710</b>	<b>2,834</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>4.6%</b>

- The for-profit sector grew at a larger rate than the non-profit sector: 6.7% (106 for-profit centres) compared to 1.6% (18 non-profit centres).
- Regionally, the largest increases in number of child care centres were in Edmonton (71 centres) and Calgary (43 centres).

Region	Day Care		Out of School Care	
	Program Change	% Change	Program Change	% Change
001 - NORTHWEST	4	11.1%	1	4.0%
002 - NORTHEAST	6	35.3%	2	10.5%
003 - EDMONTON	47	12.1%	24	5.6%
004 - CENTRAL	8	12.1%	3	3.4%
005 - CALGARY	16	5.3%	27	7.2%
006 - SOUTH	-5	-7.9%	1	1.9%
007 - NORTH CENTRAL	8	26.7%	4	13.8%
008 - METIS SETTLEMENT	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	<b>84</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>6.1%</b>

**Question 3: PA-274**

Ms Pancholi

**I'm wondering if you would speak to – on pages 9 and 10 of the annual report it references the early learning and child care program, otherwise known as the \$25-per-day program – how you believe that the program assisted with ensuring professional development opportunities, training, and qualifications for early childhood educators.**

Response:

- Given that the \$25-per-day program was a pilot, the program assisted only some early childhood educators with professional development opportunities and training.
- The early learning and child care program pilot centres (\$25-per-day programs) were asked to participate in the following professional development (PD) activities:
  - Attend and complete online training through McEwan University to implement the Flight curriculum practice framework.
  - Work with a Pedagogical partner (ARCQE) after online course was completed to embed Flight curriculum framework practice concepts into child care program.
  - Work to build capacity to support the inclusion of children with special needs through the ASaP ( Access, Support and Participation) program

- As the pilot winds down, Children’s Services is currently expanding training and coaching supports to all early childhood educators to enhance inclusive child care programming and the implementation of evidence-based curriculum practices across the province.

**Question 4: PA-275**

Ms Pancholi

**The supports for youth transitioning out of care on page 16 of the annual report, which references supports for youth to succeed. I’m sorry if this is a repetitive question, but I just want to make sure that I get an answer about how many young people who maybe were part of the support and financial assistance agreements – do you track how many of those young people are indigenous?**

Response:

- In 2018/19, approximately 1,144 or 56% of the young adults who had an active Support and Financial Assistance Agreement (SFAA) were Indigenous.

**Question 5: PA-277**

Ms Pancholi

**With respect to the well-being and resiliency framework, which is referenced on page 15 of the annual report: to what extent was the framework proposing a departure from current practice by service delivery staff through parent link centres and agency partners? Was a review or assessment done at that time or since that time to evaluate how parent link centres and early childhood coalitions, for example, delivered the outcomes of the framework and whether there were any concerns that it was being provided inconsistent with what was set out in the framework?**

Response

- A March 2019 analysis of all prevention, early intervention service providers (including parent link centres and early childhood coalitions) came to the following conclusions:
  1. Funding was not equitably distributed across all areas of the province;
  2. There were gaps in service for middle years and youth;
  3. There was inconsistency across regions regarding what was being funded in terms of the continuum of service (universal, targeted and intensive).
- As a result of this analysis, all Qualified Service Providers were informed the Wellbeing and Resiliency (WBR) Framework, the WBR Evaluation Framework and the Miyo Resource would guide future procurement of services and would be reflected in the terms of any new contracts and grants.

**Question 6: PA-277**

Ms Pancholi

**I'm wondering if the ministry can tell us how many of the ministry's executive team have taken the indigenous cultural understanding training, and what percentage of ministry staff have completed, and how you're ensuring that's happening for new staff.**

Response:

- The Deputy Minister (DM) has completed the CHR Indigenous Learning Initiative Foundations training. Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) have all taken the Children's Services training which is equivalent to the ILI. One of the ADMs is Indigenous and leads all of the Indigenous Cultural Understanding training in the ministry.
- In 2018/19, 1,058 (40%) Children's Services staff had completed the Indigenous Learning Initiative (IIT) training offered by the Public Service Commission, including exemptions, also fulfilling ICUF's introductory Foundations Pathway.
- All new Children's Services Case Workers are required to take the Working with Indigenous Children, Families, and Communities three day module. Other Children's Services staff have the option to take any available training through ICUF which is available, tracked and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

**Question 7: PA-277**

Ms Pancholi

**With respect to Jordan's principle, if you could provide a description of the process and whether or not there are continuing to be ongoing requests and enquiries around Jordan's principle and the staff that may be associated with processing Jordan's principle's enquiries.**

Response:

- On November 15, 2018, the Government of Alberta, Government of Canada and First Nations Health Consortium signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to fully implement Jordan's Principle in Alberta.
- The MOU was the first of its kind in Canada. It created a First Nations-driven process where the First Nations Health Consortium (FNHC) and the federal and provincial governments work together to coordinate services so that, when a child needs support, there are no unnecessary delays.
- This MOU allows for a clear process in Alberta, to address Jordan's Principle cases and connect children and families with the necessary supports.
- The starting point for a Jordan's Principle inquiry is through the FNHC or Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). The majority of the time the inquiry is handled accordingly without Alberta involvement. If it is a more complicated inquiry (child in care etc.) FNHC and ISC have the ability to directly contact Jordan's Principle Alberta leads.

- Alberta has two dedicated senior staff members identified as leads, one from Health and one from CS, to assist ISC and the FNHC in ensuring services and inquiries are responded to within the timelines.
- CS has transferred lead for Jordan's Principle to Health, as the majority of cases are health related.
- CS continues to support the work with other ministries, the federal government and the First Nations Health Consortium on implementing Jordan's Principle.
- In 2018/19, CS responded to 15 Jordan's Principle inquiries from ISC within 48 hours with the CS lead connecting with program areas to gather information and respond to ISC.

**Question 8: PA-277**

Ms Renaud

**My questions are also about the well-being and resiliency framework, specifically the evaluation framework. I noticed that missing is the timeline for implementing the best practices and data-collection measures. I'm wondering if the ministry can provide an update on that. Who would do this work in terms of service providers? How and when will that happen? Will we see the data that supports future changes? As well, what related training have service providers received?**

Response:

- Implementing best practices and data-collection measures outlined in the Well-Being and Resiliency (WBR) Evaluation Framework are on-going activities that are embedded in initiatives such as the Family Resource Network (FRN). Service providers support this work on an on-going basis through their regular data reporting. For example, providers are required to submit nominal roll data to the ministry on a monthly basis. This data will provide us with a baseline to which we can compare future data and inform future policy, practice and funding decisions.

**Question 9: PA-277**

Ms Renaud

**I understand that on page 10 it tells us that there are 57 parent link centres funded at \$25 million. I'm wondering if we can get a breakdown of these parent link centres, as to which other communities they support other than the community where they're located.**

Response:

- Although the exact count of communities served fluctuated from time to time, as of March 2019, there were 60 PLC grants serving approximately 198 communities through central locations and outreach programming. See attachment for listing of PLCs in Alberta.

**Question 10: PA-277**

Mr. Dach

**How often were the files of indigenous and nonindigenous children who received services reviewed over the course of the '18-19 year? Are there still inconsistencies in the follow-up services provided by the ministry to indigenous children as reported by OAG in July 2016 when on average indigenous children were:**

**more than twice as likely not to have had their permanency plan followed up every three months, nearly one-and-a-half times as likely not to have face-to-face to contact with their caseworker every three month, [and] more than one-and-a-half-times as likely**

**as nonindigenous children?**

Response:

- The files of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous children who received services were reviewed every 3 months in 18-19 year.
- Children's Services has put processes in place to ensure service delivery regions have addressed any deficiencies and to also include Indigenous and non-Indigenous analysis in public reporting of the Child Intervention Standards results.

**Question 11: PA-277**

Mr. Guthrie

**On page 11 it also states that \$1.5 million was given to parent link centres for prevention-focused services for indigenous families. What kind of prevention-focused services are being provided in that? How effective has the program been, and how does the department measure the success?**

Response:

- Grants were provided in 2019-20 to nine rural and urban Parent Link Centres (PLC) to enhance or build the PLC's ability to deliver the PLC core services more effectively to meet the needs of Indigenous families and communities.
- PLCs developed specific goals to enhance the way they support Indigenous families. This included intentional engagement and outreach with families and Indigenous-serving organizations existing in the community to build stronger partnerships, as well as engaging elders and hiring cultural liaison staff to incorporate protocol, ceremony, language and cultural activities within their programming. Services included early childhood development programs and developmental screening, parenting programs, family support programs rooted in cultural experiences, and supported referrals to other community resources to meet family needs.
- PLCs provided a mid-year and year-end grant report outlining their progress. Broadly, the reports show that funds were used to meet stated goals of creating cultural liaison staff positions; increasing resources for Indigenous protocols and ceremony; engagement with elders to enhance the core services provided by

PLCs for Indigenous families; and an increase in partnerships and working relationships with Indigenous-serving organizations and First Nations communities.

- Two new Indigenous focused PLCs were also funded in 2019-20 from this investment: one in North Edmonton and another on Stoney Nakoda First Nation.

**Question 12: PA-277**

Mr. Guthrie

**Page 11 of the annual report states that \$12.6 million is provided for home visitation as well as an addition \$1.6 to address wait-lists and service delivery gaps. It states purpose is to address challenges before they lead to intervention by providing the family with information, referrals, and goal setting. So can the department explain what type of information and supports are provided by home visitation and the challenges faced by staff during visitation? Then, what type of goals do families set up, you know, with these visits, and how are you able to determine and encourage successful outcomes with these families?**

Response:

- Home visitors meet frequently (weekly to begin with) with parents in their home to enhance parenting skills, provide information on child development, child health and other aspects of positive family functioning. Providing parent education through home visits and connecting parents to community resources is effective in reducing isolation and promoting healthy lifestyles and healthy relationships within the family needed for children to reach their full potential. Home visitors link families to a network of community services and resources they can use to provide their children with a good start in life and address the needs of the family.
- Goal setting is done with the family and is driven by what they hope to achieve for their child and family within the home visit. Goals vary greatly from family to family but the focus is typically on these key areas:
  - Promote positive parent-child relationships.
  - Improve parenting knowledge and skills.
  - Foster healthy child development.
  - Strengthen community connections.
  - Promote family wellness and provide information and support to link families with their communities and build coping and problem-solving strategies.
- The Department collects annual activity reports such as how many families are being served, as well as any waitlists agencies have. Service delivery regions monitor program outcomes based on the deliverables outlined in the Home Visitation contracts.

**Question 13: PA-277**

Mr. Guthrie

**On page 21 of the annual report it states that in '18-19 the department fully implemented**

**Practice Strategies for Lifelong Connections . . . a spectrum-wide approach . . . provides staff with tools and processes that focus on ensuring critical thinking in decision-making and that . . . meaningful connections . . . are an active part of planning with families.**

**Can the department explain what tools and processes are being deployed across the ministry for this project, and what did and how much did the project cost to develop and deploy, and then how successful has launch been for that?**

Response:

- Examples of the tools include:
  - explicit case planning tools that focus on key domains of connection and well-being for children (relational, physical, legal and cultural) and a requirement to address the ongoing connection of children to their families, their communities and their culture
  - Processes that strengthen the approach to looking for extended family for placement and connection
  - Strengthened approaches to managing transitions for children and families (ie, a transition back home or to another placement) to ensure continuity of care and information sharing
- The project utilized existing department resources and was integrated into the work of service delivery subject matter expertise, including practice specialists who work across the province.
- The department will measure success through formal file reviews. A file review will be launched once sufficient time has passed to see evidence of uptake. This is typically a year after full implementation.

**Question 14: PA-277**

Mr. Guthrie

**On page 15 of the annual report it states that \$1.1 million was granted to organizations in indigenous communities to strengthen the organizations' capacity to improve the lives of children, youth, and families. Can the department explain, you know, how these grants are used for this purpose, and how the funds have been used to improve the lives of indigenous children? Then, I guess it would be measurements of success as well for that program.**

Response:

- Building capacity within Indigenous communities to support self-determination was a recommendation from the all-party Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention.



- Children's Services (CS) provided a total of \$1.1M in 2018/19 for nine, one-time grants that support Indigenous communities or Indigenous serving organizations to identify opportunities for capacity building for Indigenous people.
- The community capacity building grants supported projects that:
  - Strengthen self-governance capacity;
  - Assess community needs;
  - Support reconciliation efforts through community-driven activities that support cultural connectedness such as culture camps; and
  - Build capacity of Indigenous communities to implement culturally-sensitive child intervention and prevention practices.
- One example is the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation. AWN received capacity dollars for a temporary resource worker to build the capacity of families to navigate the Child intervention system so that families and children feel more supported. The grant also included cultural camps to increase the awareness of AWN's unique culture and history.
- Pikanii First Nation held three culture camps with youth in care. They used funding to bring in Elders to create greater cultural connection for the youth to their community.
- Each of the nine grants were unique with outcomes varying depending on the goals of the community. In addition, Children's Services follows grant management procedures whereby all grant recipients are expected to submit financial reports and demonstrate that the outcomes of the agreement are met.

**Question 15: PA-277**

Mr. Guthrie

**On page 15 of the annual report it states that in '18-19 the ministry released the Well-Being and Resiliency Framework. Does the framework itself have targeted outcomes, and if so, what are they? Also, what are the key strategies to meet those outcomes and also to measure that performance?**

Response:

- The Well-Being and Resiliency Framework (WBR) provides a rationale for and describes the ways of working to promote well-being and resiliency in Children's Services.

It serves as a guide to the Ministry in enhancing and increasing prevention and early intervention services and supports for infants, children, youth and families. It builds on the Prevention and Early Intervention Framework for Children, Youth and Families and reflects the most current research, leading practices, cultural diversity and an Indigenous worldview.

The well-being and resiliency model was developed to demonstrate:

1. An umbrella of support – offered through prevention and early intervention programs funded by the government that contribute to strengthening protective factors.
2. A continuum of programming – that promotes equity for Albertans.
3. A strong foundation of services – critical to supporting effective program delivery.

The outcomes of the Framework are:

- Children and families are more socially connected and linked to supports.
- Parents and caregivers have knowledge about parenting and child development.
- Parents and caregivers are resilient.
- Children experience healthy social and emotional development.
- Services are consistently available, aligned, effective and accountable.
- Programs are delivered by competent and knowledgeable staff.
- Programs are culturally safe and inclusive.

Outcomes were determined through extensive consultation with stakeholders across Alberta with the goal of improving well-being and resiliency in families.