

Standing Committee on Public Accounts
Children's Services 2017-18 Annual Report
Follow up Questions and Responses

PA-784

Mrs. Aheer:

What specific resources have been put in place respecting manageable workloads for caseworkers, and real-time access to information?

Response:

- Children's Services is supporting staff by piloting new approaches to assigning and balancing caseloads and creating continuous improvements across the system, including new training and other supports.
- The Workload Assessment Model (WAM) was developed to help measure workloads in front-line delivery roles and to identify approaches for managing workload.
- WAM allows cases to be assigned by first considering the number of cases, case intensity, benchmarks, and worker capacity.
- A provincial recruitment strategy is currently underway to promote recruitment with a priority on areas with high vacancy rates. The ministry has also made structural changes to include a Provincial Director of Child Intervention Delivery. This role includes striving for provincial consistency in both practice and administrative matters and creates the ability to move resources around the province as needed to help balance workloads.
- Child Intervention front-line workers have access to real-time reporting that provides a variety of information related to the children, youth, and young adults that they support. There are two services that provide this information to staff: The Timely and Accurate Program Information Strategy (TAPIS) and Child Intervention Reports – both are self-service (meaning staff can access at any time) and/or they can subscribe to certain reports to be delivered to their email on a specific schedule (daily, weekly, monthly):
 - TAPIS provides child intervention staff with real-time access to listings of child intervention files that have missing or overdue information. Examples include files with missing placements, legal authorities, or service plans. This information is updated daily.
 - The Child Intervention Reports website provides access to a variety of reports and data regarding child intervention. These reports include information on activity volumes and trends related to intakes, investigations, interventions (0-17), and post-intervention supports (18-23). The information is updated daily, and reports provide average monthly and yearly trends.

PA-785

Ms. Littlewood:

How many child-care spaces are available outside of Edmonton and Calgary, in rural Alberta, and how many spaces are in Vegreville and Fort Saskatchewan?

Response:

The following tables provide a breakdown of child care programs and spaces for rural/urban communities and for Fort Saskatchewan and Vegreville:

Rural or Urban	# of Child Care Programs	# of Enrollments	# of Spaces
Rural*	325	6,397	9,529
Urban	2,385	94,532	115,295
Total	2,710	100,929	124,824

*Rural communities include communities with a postal code beginning with "T0" (this aligns with Canada Post determination of rural and urban communities)

Child Care Programs and Spaces as of March 2018 – Fort Saskatchewan				
Program Type	# of Program	Enrollment	Spaces	Percentage
Day Care Program	9	349	494	71%
Family Day Home	1	43	64	67%
Out of School	10	295	596	49%
Pre-School	6	40	146	27%
Total	26	727	1,300	56%

Child Care Programs and Spaces as of March 2018 – Vegreville				
Program Type	# of Program	Enrollment	Spaces	Percentage
Day Care Program	2	43	77	56%
Family Day Home	1	0	30	0%
Out of School	2	67	117	57%
Total	5	110	224	49%

PA-786

Mr. Clark:

Is there funding to support court processes and other aspects of Bill 22?

Response:

- The ministry does not fund legal representation for First Nations communities or Delegated First Nation Agencies; the type and level of involvement a community wishes to have in court processes is determined and funded through their nation.
- The recently passed *Act for Strong Families Building Stronger Communities* does not provide any funding for First Nations regarding court appearance for private guardianship, nor does it provide funding for applicants in the court process.

PA-786

Ms. Goodridge:

What formula does the government use to calculate subsidies for child care subsidy programs?

Response:

Child Care subsidy is calculated based on a number of variables, including:

- number of applicants (single or both parents)
- community location of the provided child care
- number of dependents
- number and age of children enrolled in child care
- type of child care program care
- qualifying income

The current maximum subsidy rates are posted on the Children's Services website (childrensservices.alberta.ca and search for child care subsidy where families can also estimate their subsidy eligibility). The formula used is:

Subsidy

Step 1: Determine Subsidy Qualifying Income

First step is to calculate the credits available to a family:

- $\$25 \times (\# \text{ of Parents} - 1) \times (11 - \# \text{ of dependents}) + \$6.25 \times (\# \text{ of dependents} - 1) \times (26 - \# \text{ of Dependents}) = \text{Credits}$

Next, calculate the **Subsidy Qualifying Income (monthly)**:

- Net Monthly Income (from CRA line 150/12) - Credits = **Subsidy Qualifying Income (monthly)**

Step 2: Is the family eligible for full subsidy?

If **Subsidy Qualifying Income** is less than or equal to the **maximum income threshold** of \$4,167, the family will receive full subsidy.

Step 3: If family is not eligible for full subsidy, are they eligible for partial subsidy?

(Maximum Subsidy Rate (outlined in Table 1) – (Subsidy Qualifying Income - \$4,167)) x 50% = Eligible Subsidy Amount

PA-786

Ms. Goodridge:

What consultations have been done to date and who has the ministry contacted as stakeholders, with respect to the regulations of Private Member's Bill 206, *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement (Adoption Advertising) Amendment Act, 2017*?

Response:

- The ministry has consulted several times with Licensed Adoptions Agencies, who, as per the parameters of this legislation, will be the ones responsible for implementation of the regulations that are being developed.

PA-787

Mrs. Aheer:

Are there continued decreases in youth suicide following the decrease reported in 2016?

Response:

According to data collected by Alberta Health, the rate of suicide has decreased since 2014. Data is not yet available for 2017.

Published data is available to 2014 at
www.ahw.gov.ab.ca/IHDA_Retrieval/ihdaData.do.

PA-789

Mr. Clark:

Of the 7,300 child care spaces in the province, what percentage of the total population does that represent?

Response:

The 7,300 spaces in the \$25/day Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Centres pilot represents 14 per cent of all day care spaces (total of 50,972 spaces), or 6 per cent of spaces when all program types are included (day cares as well as family day homes, out of school care, preschool for a total of 124,824 spaces).

These numbers reflect totals as of March 2018.

PA-789

Mr. Clark:

Can the department provide the list of where the 122 child care centres operating under the \$25-a-day daycare program are located?

Response:

A list of the 122 Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Centres and their locations is available at: <https://www.alberta.ca/early-learning-child-care-centres.aspx>.

The website also provides a map of all currently operating ELCC Centres across the province, giving families the ability to search by location to find a Centre near them.

PA-789

Mr. Hunter:

Does the department align planning and performance measurement with financial planning?

Response:

The ministry three-year business plan is developed to support the strategic direction of Children's Services. The process of setting goals and outcomes takes into consideration the budget targets and readiness of the department and stakeholders to meet the goals and outcomes. The department's business plan includes targets that are set for the performance measures in the plan. Alignment of planning and performance measurement includes determining outcomes, goals and objectives over the three-year period and runs parallel to financial planning. Program areas in the ministry often consider the amount of funding allocated to the area when developing the business plan, including the performance measures and indicators. This is especially true when the performance measures focuses on quantitative results (i.e., percentages, percentage increase).

PA-790

Mrs. Aheer:

Please provide additional information on the implementation and progress of the electronic real-time reporting system related to children in care, and any results the department has recorded in the outcomes for children in care.

Response:

- The Timely and Accurate Program Information Strategy (TAPIS) system provides child intervention staff with real-time access to listings of child intervention files which have missing or overdue information. Examples include files with missing placements, legal authorities, and service plans.

- New electronic measurement tools are also being developed that will allow better monitoring and standards results, and address issues as soon as they arise.
- Improved reporting will help our staff prioritize and respond in a more focused manner to the expectations in legislation, policy, and standards.
- The change in approach from surveying a sample to inclusion of all cases provides an opportunity to rectify deficiencies on all cases.
 - Executive leadership is able to use the results to align resources and supports to ensure compliance.
 - This immediacy and validity of practice measures provides an opportunity to address deficiencies in a timely manner.
- On April 1, 2018, three new electronic practice measures were implemented to improve practice results, address deficiencies in a timely manner and inform policy. These new measures are responsive to recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor General and apply to the Child Intervention Case Information Online (CICIO) system:
 - Case Plan is entered for the current intervention.
 - Evidence of face-to-face contact with the child every 90 days is entered.
 - All residential facilities licences are entered. This includes foster homes, group homes and secure treatment facilities accepting children placed by the Director.
- To date, the results are favourable. The primary reason for this is the real-time monitoring by executive leadership as well as front-line staff who use the results to prioritize work and address deficiencies in a timely manner.

PA-791

Mrs. Aheer:

With respect to Jordan's Principle:

- Which ministry is responsible for those initiatives?

- How are applications being processed, and how is the department doing that within 48 hours?

Response:

- Children's Services is the current lead on Jordan's Principle.
- On November 15, 2018 the Government of Alberta (GoA), Government of Canada (GoC) and First Nations partners, represented by the First Nations Health Consortium (FNHC), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing a tripartite agreement committing for the full implementation of Jordan's Principle in Alberta.

- The MOU will further support children, youth and families in receiving the supports and services when they need them, and formally strengthen the partnership between GoA, GoC, and the FNHC.
- In Alberta, the federal government, provincial government and First Nations all deliver programs and services with a variety of eligibility criteria. This makes it critical that everyone works together to ensure gaps in services do not exist.
- There is no application process and Jordan's Principle is not a program. A Jordan's Principle inquiry may be received through the FNHC, Indigenous Services Canada focal point, or the Jordan's Principle 24 hour call centre.
- From there it is shared with the Children's Services lead, who is connected to a GoA Cross Ministry working group that can best address the gap or service needed.
- The federal government has contracted the First Nations Health Consortium to navigate services and receive inquiries.
 - If the FNHC identifies a request where existing services do not meet the child's needs, the request is escalated to the Indigenous Services Canada focal point.
- The Indigenous Services Canada focal point's role is to navigate service requests as well as to fund gaps in services through the Service Access Resolution Fund.
- The Jordan's Principle 24 Hour Call Centre is located in Ottawa and is available for emergency requests.
- Although much work has been done by the federal government and the First Nations Health Consortium to implement Jordan's Principle in Alberta, a collaborative approach is required with the Government of Alberta (GoA) to further strengthen implementation.

PA-791

Mr. Home:

- **How has the department engaged with Indigenous peoples and stakeholders in implementing reforms to the child intervention system?**
- **What is the department doing to support Indigenous families and communities so that Indigenous children don't need to be taken into care?**

Response:

- The ministry has engaged substantively on reforms to the child intervention system, both at a leadership level as well as within the Delegated First Nation Agencies that implement the reforms in their communities.
- Nations, through their Delegated First Nation Agencies, have an active role in identifying, developing, shaping, and scoping operational policies and programs that are being put into place.
- The ministry has undertaken significant engagement with Indigenous communities on Children's Services matters overall including the Sixties Scoop

apology, Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework, Ministerial Action Plan on Child Intervention, Development of *A Stronger, Safer Tomorrow*, and *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act* amendments.

- Specifically, over the past year the Minister engaged with many Indigenous leaders and communities across Alberta. In spring, 2018, the Minister met with Chiefs of Treaty 8 First Nations, Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, the Blackfoot Confederacy, Stoney Nakoda First Nations and the Tsuut'ina Nation. Community engagement sessions were also held with First Nations leadership, services providers, and community members in Bigstone Cree Nation, Paul First Nations, and Piikani Nation. The Minister also attended the June 2018 AoTC to hear from Chiefs.
- In April 2018, the ministry invited First Nations Designates (FND) and Delegated First Nations Agency (DFNA) Directors to participate in a separate engagement session to receive their feedback on the development of the public action plan.
- This engagement continues. On December 12, the Minister met with Chiefs and other First Nation representatives to hear their thoughts around improving cultural connectedness, and the role of the Band Designate.
- In addition, Children's Services will continue to participate in the Child and Family Services Trilateral Engagement Process (CFSTEP) as well as the Treaty 8 Protocol Agreement - Women and Children Table, and the Blackfoot Confederacy Protocol Agreement.
- Many of the practice and policy changes that have been made over the last several years emphasize the need for thorough assessment and consideration of all options before making any decisions about a removal of a child from a home, and the expectation that the child intervention system create networks around children and families to keep them safe and together. This has resulted in more children staying at home with their families while supports are provided to ensure their immediate and long-term safety and well-being.

PA-792

Mr. Clark:

Please provide the administrative costs of the \$25-a-day daycare program, how much of that goes to subsidizing spaces, and how much is for other expenditures.

Response:

- \$43M of the funds from the Bilateral Agreement was spent in the fiscal year 2017-18. However, a total of \$59.5M has been spent on the 122 ELCC Centres pilots. Of this amount:
 - The Government of Alberta has contributed \$13.9M
 - The Government of Canada has contributed \$45.6M

- **\$59.5M has been distributed to ELCC Centres in grant funding to participate in activities related to:**
 - **Increase access by increasing the number of child care spaces or increase enrollment (\$5.6M);**
 - **Address affordability by capping parent fees at \$25/day by using ELCC grant funding to offset the parent fees (\$39.4M);**
 - **Improve quality by working collaboratively to support development of practices to explore the implementation of Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Child Care Framework, a play-based curriculum focused on broad, holistic goals, and by working with Getting Ready for Inclusion Today (GRIT), a non-profit organization focused on supporting inclusive child care practices (\$4.4M);**
 - **Address improvements by strengthening partnerships and addressing any gaps within the community's child care system, such as offering flexible child care for parents who work part-time or shifts that are outside typical day care hours (7 a.m. to 6 p.m.) (\$4.9M); and**
 - **Implement voluntary wage floors to increase staff compensation based on certification level (\$5.2M).**

- **\$45,000 was spent in 2017-18 on evaluation activities.**
 - **A total of \$1M has been allocated for a three-year evaluation.**