



B.C. Adoption Update

April 2015



REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

April 17, 2015

The Honourable Linda Reid
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Suite 207, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Dear Ms. Speaker,

I have the honour of submitting the report *B.C. Adoption Update, April 2015*, a follow-up to *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption System*, to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. This report is prepared in accordance with Section 6(b) of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "mecturpellafond". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.

Sincerely,
Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond
Representative for Children and Youth

pc: Ms. Jane Thornthwaite
Chair, Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth

Cc: Mr. Craig James
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

B.C. Adoption Update

Introduction

In June of 2014, the Representative for Children and Youth issued a report entitled *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption System*. The report showed that, at any given time, more than 1,000 British Columbia children and youth in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) were waiting to be adopted.

During the release of the report, a joint event between Representative Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond and Minister Stephanie Cadieux, the Representative committed to issuing periodic updates on the status of B.C.'s waiting children. The first of those updates was released on Nov. 18, 2014.

This is the second *B.C. Adoption Update*. It shows that, during the fiscal year 2014/15, a total of 265 children and youth in care of the B.C. government were placed for adoption. This total falls below the ministry's stated goal of 300 adoptions for 2014/15. However, the Representative acknowledges that progress has been made on several fronts as a result of MCFD's renewed focus on permanency and adoption.

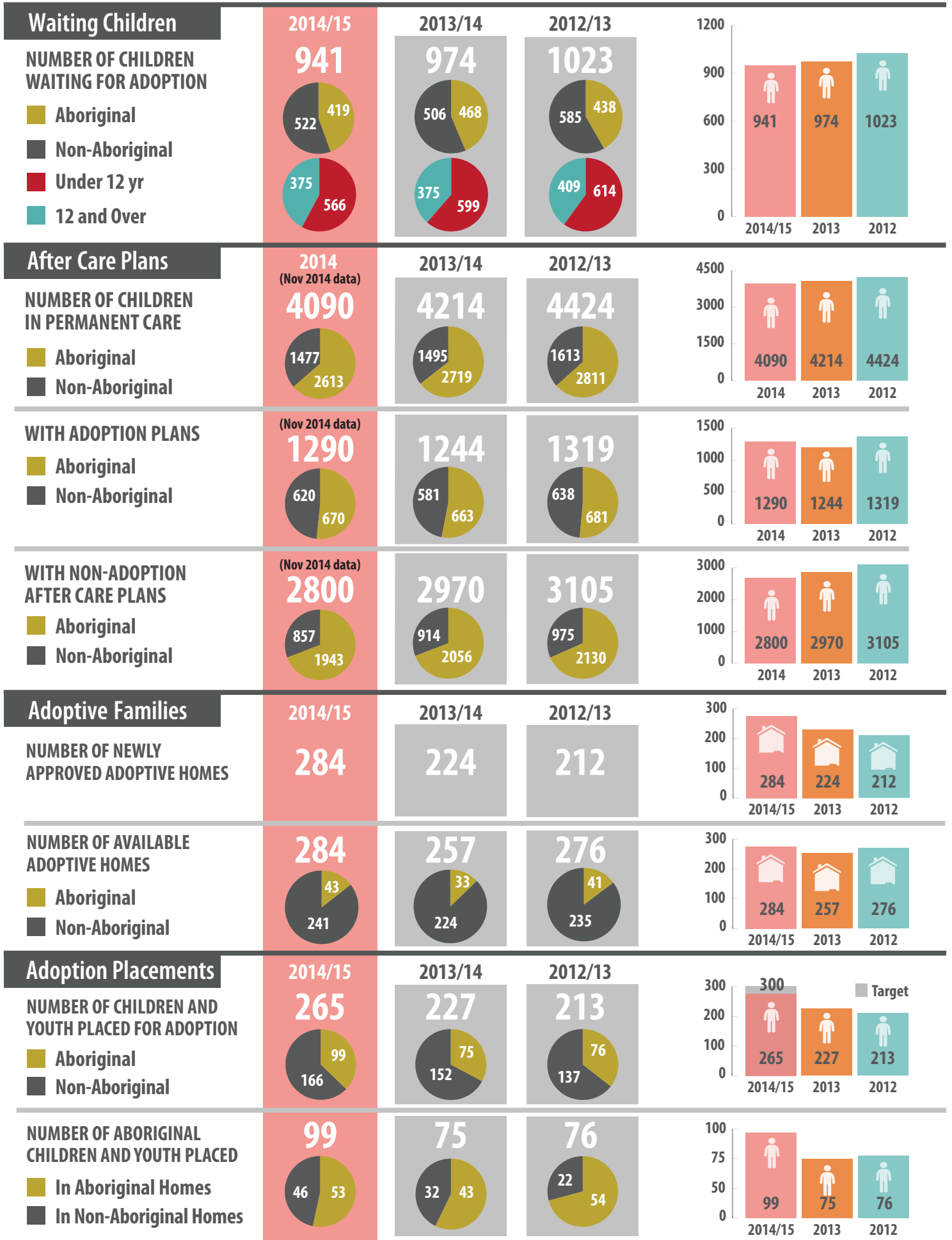
Thirty-eight more children in government care were adopted and 60 more adoptive homes were approved in B.C. this past fiscal year than in 2013/14. The number of children and youth in care waiting for adoption fell to 941 – 33 fewer than in 2013/14. And even though the total number of children in permanent care in B.C. decreased, the number of children in care with adoption plans grew by 46 to a total of 1,290.

As Aboriginal children are vastly over-represented in government care in B.C., a special focus has been placed on collecting adoption and permanency statistics for that cohort. A total of 99 Aboriginal children and youth in care of the B.C. government were placed for adoption in 2014/15, compared to 75 in the previous year. The number of Aboriginal children in care with adoption plans grew by seven to 670. The number of available Aboriginal adoptive homes in B.C. grew by 10 to 43 and the number of Aboriginal children placed for adoption in Aboriginal homes rose from 43 to 53.

The Representative would like to thank families who have come forward to adopt children and youth in government care while acknowledging that much work is still to be done to find permanency for B.C.'s waiting children.

Included in the *B.C. Adoption Update* are key adoption and permanency statistics for this past fiscal year – as well as for the previous two fiscal years. The Representative's Office will continue to monitor and report out on these statistics going forward and the Representative remains committed to working with MCFD on the important task of finding permanence for B.C.'s children and youth in care.

The Representative continues to call on government to fully implement all recommendations from *Finding Forever Families* in order to ensure the systemic change required. In particular, the Representative urges government to move forward with amendments to the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCS Act)* to require an annual external review of permanency plans for all children in care. This will ensure better accountability, that work is completed to a higher standard, and help prevent children from drifting through foster care.





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