

Advocating for Change:

Five Years in Review

APRIL 2023



REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

April 18, 2023

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

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour of submitting the report *Advocating for Change: Five Years in Review* to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

This report is prepared in accordance with Section 20 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* which gives the Representative authority to make special reports to the Legislative Assembly if the Representative considers it necessary.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth
Representative for Children and Youth

pc: Ms. Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Ms. Karan Riarh
Committee Clerk, Legislative Assembly

Territorial Acknowledgment

The Representative and staff, who do their work throughout the province, would like to acknowledge that we are living and working with gratitude and respect on the traditional territories of the First Nations peoples of British Columbia. We specifically acknowledge and express our gratitude to the keepers of the lands on the traditional territories of the Lheidli T'enneh peoples (Prince George) and the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations (Victoria), where our offices are located.

We would also like to acknowledge our Métis and Inuit partners and friends living in these beautiful territories.

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Advocating for Change: Five Years in Review

Over the last five years, the world has faced unprecedented change, intersecting public health emergencies and a reckoning of historic and ongoing prejudice against First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. During this time, British Columbia's Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) has monitored government services and advocated for the rights of children and their communities, raising awareness about inequities and systemic discrimination, and calling attention to the fragile infrastructure of our child- and youth-serving system.

The Representative is responsible for making recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of designated services in B.C., in accordance with the *Representative for Children and Youth Act (RCY Act)*. To do this, RCY works closely with children, youth, young adults and families, subject matter experts, service providers, public bodies, child advocates and Indigenous leadership to make recommendations for change. To date, RCY has made 216 recommendations.

Over time, the focus and approach to making and monitoring recommendations has evolved. When RCY began in 2006, recommendations focused on the immediate issues of compliance and quality assurance identified in the *BC Children and Youth Review*.¹ But the response to recommendations and the impact of calls for change have not addressed many of the complex systemic and structural causes of inequity, inaccessibility, inconsistent service quality, racism and discrimination in the child- and youth-serving system. Since the appointment of Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth as Representative in the fall of 2018, RCY recommendations have shifted to a more systemic focus, advocating for transformational change to protect the rights, interests and quality of care for children, youth, young adults and families, while also calling for urgent and essential changes necessary to protect their well-being and sense of belonging.

Since her appointment, the Representative has implemented a new monitoring process to assess government's response to recommendations made by RCY. In 2019, the *RCY Recommendations Monitoring Guidelines* were developed in consultation with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC),² the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA). The guidelines support ministries' engagement in the recommendations process including the development of detailed action plans for each recommendation, along with annual self-reported progress that is assessed by the Representative and publicly reported on the RCY website. As of March 2023, 15 annual progress reports have been completed and the results suggest government is struggling to implement change, especially in some areas. To date, only 14 per cent of recommendations made by the Representative have been completed by government.

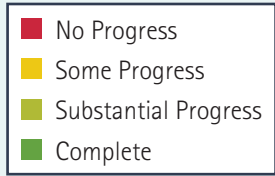
To better understand why government is not making progress on recommendations, RCY completed a five-year review that has revealed organizational and structural barriers to change.

¹ Honourable Ted Hughes, *BC Children and Youth Review: an independent review of BC's child protection system* (Victoria, BC), 2006.

² Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC), formerly known as the Ministry of Education (MOE).

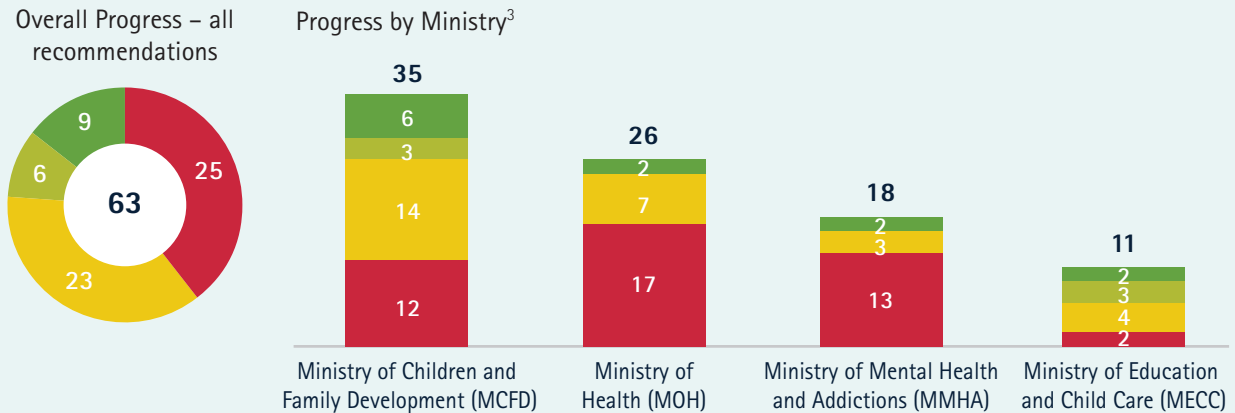


Key Highlights



Few recommendations had a rating of **Complete** (14 per cent) or **Substantial Progress** (10 per cent).

Progress varied by ministry,³ with **one-third of recommendations directed to MCFD** rated as **No Progress**, while more than **half of the recommendations directed to MOH and MMHA** had a rating of **No Progress**.

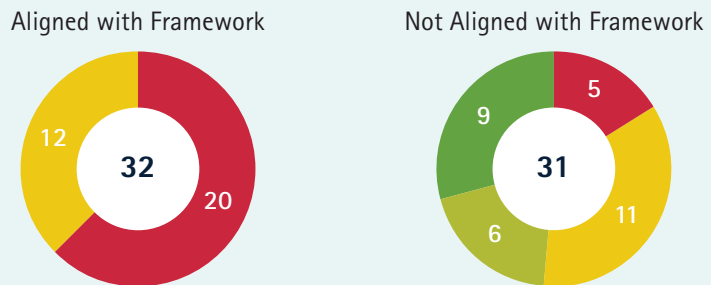


Recommendations calling for collaboration and engagement had lower rates of progress. **None of the 14 calls for engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations are complete.**

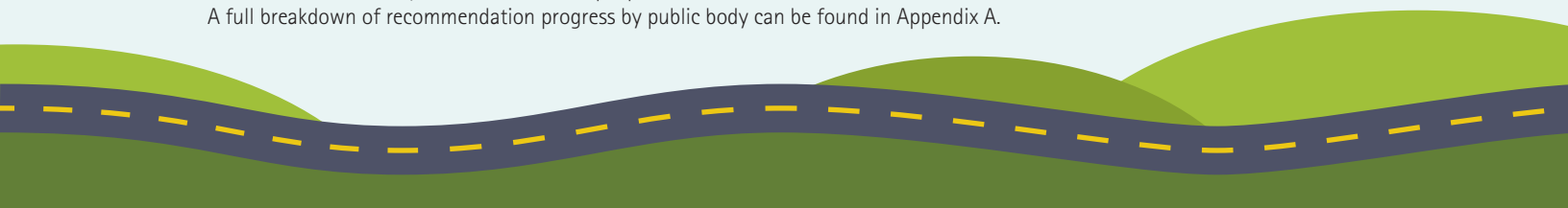


Out of the 63 recommendations, 32 were aligned with a government framework. None of these 32 have been completed.

Recommendations with a rating of Substantial Progress (six) or Complete (nine) included **robust project planning** and a **relevant Action Plan**. Government made swift progress when its plans involved **contracted subject matter experts**.



³ A recommendation may be directed to multiple public bodies. For this reason this table will sum to more than 63. A full breakdown of recommendation progress by public body can be found in Appendix A.



Measuring Action

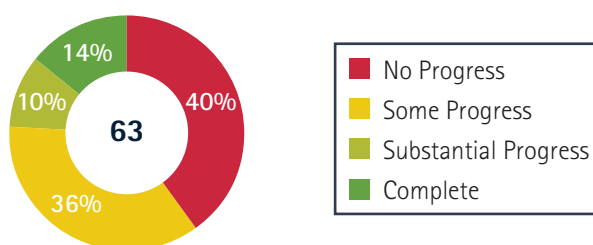
RCY currently monitors action planning and the implementation of recommendations made across the following 10 reports:

- *Room for Improvement: Toward better education outcomes for children in care* (Oct. 26, 2017)
- *Time to Listen: Youth voices on substance use* (Nov. 15, 2018)
- *Alone and Afraid: Lessons learned from the ordeal of a child with special needs and his family* (Dec. 10, 2018)
- *Caught in the Middle* (Nov. 26, 2019)
- *A Parent's Duty: Government's Obligation to Youth Transitioning into Adulthood* (Dec. 15, 2020)
- *Excluded: Increasing Understanding, Support and Inclusion for Children with FASD and their Families* (April 15, 2021)
- *Skye's Legacy: A Focus on Belonging* (June 10, 2021)
- *Detained: Rights of children and youth under the Mental Health Act* (Jan. 19, 2021)
- *At a Crossroads: The roadmap from fiscal discrimination to equity in Indigenous child welfare* (March 29, 2022)
- *A Parent's Responsibility: Government's obligation to improve the mental health outcomes of children in care* (Sept. 20, 2022)

The Representative designed the recommendations monitoring process to provide a measure of change as it is seen and felt by children, youth, young adults and families. As such, an RCY recommendation is not deemed complete until all activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete. To assess the progress of recommendations, RCY reviews evidence provided by ministries and public bodies, alongside monitoring data available from other sources to verify that evidence.

For this five-year review, only recommendations issued from 2017 to 2021, that have been assessed using the new *RCY Recommendations Monitoring Guidelines*, were included.⁴ Recommendations issued in 2022 were excluded from the review as progress reports are not yet due. Of the 63 recommendations evaluated, 14 per cent were assessed as **Complete** and 40 per cent were assessed as **No Progress**. For the five-year review period, only nine of 63 recommendations have been completed.

Overall Progress of Recommendations







⁴ A complete list of RCY recommendations and most recent progress assessments as of March 31, 2023 is provided in Appendix A.



The most common self-reported progress of government in annual progress reports received by RCY is “in progress,” but deeper analysis shows that this typically means pre-planning activities – such as the development of a project charter – may be under way but that there has been little to no progress on formal planning or implementation. The Representative believes this gives a false sense of accountability when no change has been made for children and youth and has therefore concluded that “in progress” equals inaction.

RCY’s assessment definitions are as follows:

-  **No Progress** – None of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete.
-  **Some Progress** – Some of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete.
-  **Substantial Progress** – Most of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete.
-  **Complete** – All activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete.

Not surprisingly, the Representative does not always agree with the self-reported progress of government and has, on occasion, had to reverse her own assessments when ministries report that implementation has been stalled or abandoned. Of the 63 RCY recommendations reviewed for this report, public bodies self-assessed 33 per cent of activities in their action plans as complete. However, the Representative subsequently determined that only 14 per cent were in fact fully complete, due to incomplete analysis, missing information or a failure to address the recommendation altogether. The discrepancy between government’s self-reported progress and RCY’s assessment of progress confirms the importance of the independent monitoring function of RCY.



How does RCY develop recommendations?

Recommendations Drafted

- Report team drafts initial recs
- Representative reviews and approves
- Recs reviewed with public bodies (includes government ministries)
- Feedback considered.

Post Release

- RCY meets with public bodies within two months
- Public body submits Action Plan to RCY within six months
- RCY confirms Action Plan meets intent of recs
- RCY completes recs status update at one-year anniversary of release, shares with SSCCY.

1



2



3



4



Administrative Fairness

- Report sent to public bodies for fact check and response to recs
- Feedback considered
- Formal response requested from public bodies
- Responses referenced in report
- Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth (SSCCY) advised of report release date.

Recommendations Monitored

- RCY evaluates implementation of recs
- Letter sent to public body with RCY's assessment of implementation
- Annual summary of status of recs posted on website
- Summary provided to SSCCY
- Monitor recs implementation for three years or longer, at discretion of Representative.



The Road to Implementation

To better understand where progress on implementation is delayed or disrupted, RCY broke down all 63 recommendations into distinct *actions for change*.⁵ The purpose of this assessment was to measure progress across stages. The resulting 321 actions were then mapped along the policy and legislative pathway from problem identification to service delivery. The findings create a roadmap to implementation, with clear patterns of barriers and enablers of change at every stage.

Table 1: Level of Progress of Actions for Change

Call for Action	No Progress	Some Progress	Substantial Progress	Complete	Total
1. Problem Identification	6	3	0	1	10
2. Problem Analysis	17	8	2	4	31
3. Strategy, Policy and Legislative Development	28	16	1	15	60
4. Policy, Regulation or Legislative Enactment	32	14	6	9	61
5. Practice – Development	23	11	8	9	51
6. Practice – Implementation	27	12	5	7	51
7. Service Delivery Implementation	31	9	2	7	49
8. Evaluation and Monitoring	4	0	1	3	8
Total	168	73	25	55	321

⁵ Progress assessments are based on the most recent action plans and updates provided by ministries and public bodies assessed by RCY between April 2022 and March 2023. Additional progress may have been made since the last updates were provided.



The Road To Improvement

1

Problem Identification

To address the root issue of a problem, government must have a deep understanding of issues and their impact. The Representative has called for government to deepen its understanding of systemic issues across four reports in the areas of mental health, special needs and residential services. Of the 10 calls to better understand the depth and breadth of issues, only one has been completed. The remaining nine are delayed due to a lack of available data to fully understand the actual need for services, a lack of cross-ministry collaboration to explore issues, and a lack of attention to address RCY recommendations that fall outside ministry priorities.

Construction Ahead.
Delays Expected

2

Problem Analysis

Before making changes, government typically needs to review policy, practice and/or service delivery via internal reviews, literature and jurisdictional scans, or through current state analyses to understand the extent and context of a problem. The Representative regularly calls for engagement with young people and their families, the social sector and Indigenous communities to ensure reviews are relevant to the problem issue, well-informed by lived experience and reflect commitments from government to collaboration and co-development. Of the 31 RCY calls for problem analysis, only six have seen substantial progress or are complete. Progress is reportedly delayed, again, due to a lack of relevant data and cross-ministry collaboration structures, a lack of attention to address recommendations that fall outside ministry priorities, and delays and barriers to engagement.

Under Construction

3

Strategy, Policy and Legislative Development

Nearly every recommendation made by the Representative requires new or improved policy, which typically involves planning, drafting and preparing policy or requests for regulatory or legislative changes. Seen as one of the first steps toward making some progress on implementation, action at this stage is again marred with delays due to poor data stewardship, lack of (or delayed) engagement strategies, competing government priorities and the lack of structural capacity to support a whole-child approach across government. Only 15 of the 60 calls for strategy and policy development have been completed.



4

Policy, Regulation or Legislative Enactment

Policy, regulation and legislative enactment involve approvals for implementation which can take place at different levels, from executive leadership to Cabinet, depending on the authority and impact of change. On the road to implementation, action at this stage faces significant roadblocks due to a lack of organizational and institutional will to implement change, a lack of cross-government approval pathways, and drawn-out legislative cycles. Of 61 calls for the enactment of new policies, regulatory or legislative amendments, only nine have been completed, and six have seen substantial progress.

5

6

Practice Development and Implementation

The Representative has had a strong focus on improving the quality of services by identifying practice concerns that result in inequitable, culturally unsafe, unsupportive and harmful experiences for children, youth, young adults and families. Action plans from government highlight the need for new or improved practice guidelines, standards and training materials but the development and implementation of resources is often delayed due to barriers in engagement and subject matter expertise, as well as delays in policy development earlier on in the road to implementation. While government has slightly more success in developing practice materials, these materials are not always well implemented. Of the 51 calls for practice development, actions have been taken on nine and, of these, only seven have been fully implemented to date.

7

Service Delivery Implementation

The implementation of new and improved services is the primary goal for the Representative as this is the stage where children, youth, young adults and families begin to feel the impact of recommendations. This is also the stage where government reports the least progress. Government's annual progress reports indicate that delays in implementation are the result of challenges to recruit and retain a skilled workforce, a lack of organizational capacity for change and inadequate investments to fund new services. Delays in implementation are also the result of delays in policy development and enactment earlier on the road to implementation. Of 49 calls for the implementation of new or improved services, only seven are complete.

Surveying Crews Ahead.
Proceed with Caution

8

Evaluation and Monitoring

For recommendation implementation to be successful and for the child- and youth-serving system to continuously improve itself, ongoing monitoring and evaluation are required. The Representative has made eight calls to improve data information systems, data stewardship and public reporting across six reports. Of those eight calls for change, two reporting improvements have been made and one service evaluation has been completed. The remaining five actions focus on the quality and accessibility of government data and have seen no progress due to a lack of attention to data stewardship at ministry and regional levels of service.

Why the Lack of Progress?

RCY operates from the principle that when we know better, we must do better. Yet despite public commitments and new investments to address recommendations made by the Representative, government is struggling to achieve the change that is desired for children, youth, young adults and families. Common roadblocks were identified along the road to implementation, revealing organizational, systemic and structural barriers that are contributing to tenuous and delayed action.

Barriers to Action

Meaningful Engagement

The Representative believes that working together with young people with lived experience, their families, service providers and sector leaders – along with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous peoples – is essential to address the complex and widespread problems of the child- and youth-serving systems. While government recognizes the importance of engagement, it also often reports that engagement is challenging and delays arise due to diverging priorities and engagement capacity including: “engagement fatigue,” delayed engagement strategies and a lack of existing engagement structures within government. Where engagement is taking place, consultations prioritize the ministries, strategic priorities and may fail to include action planning toward the Representative’s recommendations. For example, MMHA has completed extensive engagement with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous peoples regarding previously proposed amendments to the Mental Health Act for youth stabilization care. However, these engagements did not include consultation on recommendations related to the **current detainment** of youth identified in the Representative’s *Detained* report.

Across 63 recommendations reviewed, there are 48 distinct calls for meaningful engagement, of which only one has been completed. Of the 10 calls to collaborate with youth and young adults, only one has been completed. Most alarmingly, none of the 14 calls to engage with Indigenous communities have been completed despite government’s public commitment to ongoing consultation and cooperation following the enactment of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)* in 2019.

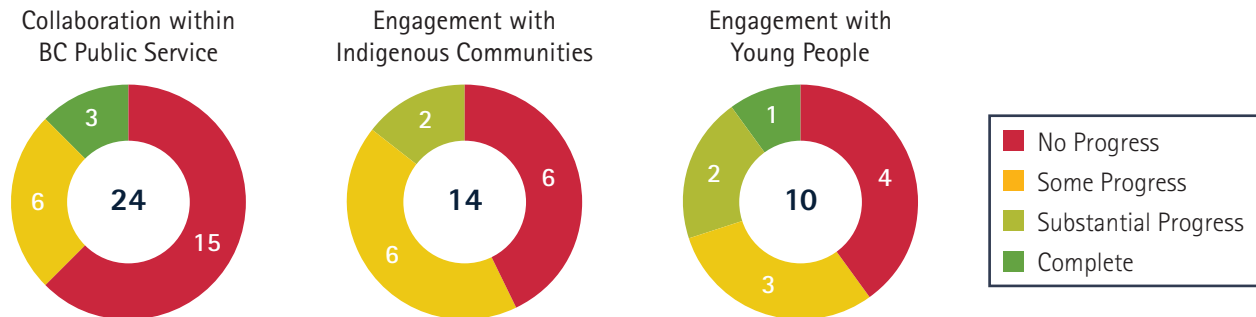
Whole Government Approach

The Representative has advocated for a whole-child approach to address fragmented service delivery and piecemeal strategies that result in gaps and cliffs for children, youth, young adults and their families. To transform services into one integrated child- and youth-serving system, RCY recommendations advocate for a whole of government approach that coordinates information-sharing, service pathways and wraparound care for families. The importance of this has been acknowledged and accepted by public bodies, however strategic frameworks continue to lack the cross-ministry linkages necessary for successful implementation. Across 63 recommendations, there have been 24 calls for cross-ministry collaboration, of which only three have been completed. Bureaucratic processes, including the lack of inter-ministerial approval pathways and governance structures, lack of inter-ministerial collaboration and coordination structures, and the lack of investment across ministries’ mandates, appear to contribute to inaction and delay. The Representative also regularly sees the responsibility of responding to her recommendations shift between teams, divisions or ministries rather than a whole ministry or whole government



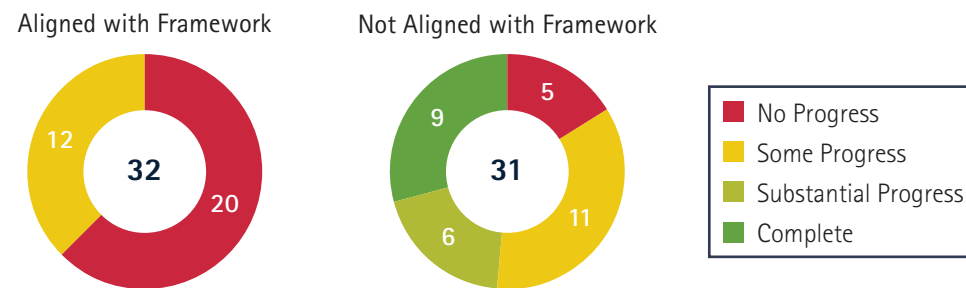
coordinated response across the road to implementation. This shifting of accountability has resulted in delays and has impacted meaningful engagement in action planning with RCY.

Level of progress for recommendations calling for collaboration or engagement



Alignment to Government Priorities

Level of progress for recommendations aligned with frameworks



The most common approach for action planning in response to the Representative’s recommendations is to align RCY calls for action to existing government priorities, ministry mandates and strategic frameworks. One would expect such alignment to be an enabler of progress with the support of institutional will, however, of the 32 recommendations that ministries have aligned with their frameworks, none have been completed. This is partially because government frameworks are challenged by multiple delays in implementation due to resourcing issues and inadequate engagement, but also because specific recommendations to address the urgent needs of children, youth, young adults and families, are lost in long-term, systems-level work. To make progress toward the Representative’s recommendations, government must commit to both full-scale transformation and the immediate changes needed which will advance and inform the long-term transformation.

Data Stewardship

The Representative believes that government must be accountable and transparent about how its policies and practice impact the well-being of children. Unfortunately, significant gaps in the collection, custody and control of data reported at ministry and regional levels impacts the accessibility and utility of information across systems. Progress reports from government have identified information gaps and data information systems challenges that are impacting their ability to inform policy development, program provision and service monitoring for children, youth, young adults and families. Citizens’ Services has



Why the Lack of Progress?

made efforts to support data collaboration through the Data Innovation Program,⁶ but the lack of quality administrative data limits the usefulness of this information. This highlights the need for a data strategy to address best practices in data stewardship at every level and across the child- and youth-serving system.

Of the seven calls to improve data stewardship and public reporting within ministries, only two have been completed and little progress has been made to develop a data strategy within ministries to better inform resourcing and policy decisions. Despite a lack of progress at a service delivery level, meaningful progress has been made in legislation with the passing of the *Anti-Racism Data Act*. This will enable ministries to disaggregate demographic data to identify and dismantle systemic and structural racism which is key enabling legislation for ministries to respond to data recommendations that are currently stuck on the road to implementation. The next important step will be to action data standards and address internal data stewardship issues so that quality information can be collected and used to inform, monitor and evaluate the child- and youth-serving system.

Enablers of Progress

By measuring progress and barriers, it was also possible to identify where progress is being made. Of the 321 RCY calls for change, 55 or 17 per cent are complete, with an additional 25 or 7.8 per cent showing substantial progress toward implementation. A review of these successful progress reports identifies two key enablers that support timely and effective implementation of RCY recommendations: robust action planning and the contracting of external service providers.

The development of a robust action plan with dedicated project management and clear responsiveness to the Representative's recommendations is the single greatest predictor of implementation success. When ministries or public bodies are engaged in the recommendations process, they are more likely to complete or make substantial progress toward implementation. Of 27 action plans with robust project management, 14 show substantial progress or have completed implementation. Government has also made swift progress when actions to support the implementation of recommendations are contracted to subject matter experts for data analysis, community-based consultants for engagement or established service providers for the development and delivery of training services. Contracting services appears to help avoid delays caused by a lack of internal expertise, complex bureaucracy, framework delays and insufficient engagement. Of the eight RCY calls for change to which government responded by contracting services, all have seen substantial progress or have been completed.

A third, unlikely, enabler of change was identified during the review – COVID-19. For the most part, government's response to the pandemic was noted as a barrier to progress toward recommendations as staff had to pivot away from recommendations-related work to focus on responding to the various crises arising from the pandemic. However, in some situations, stay-in-place orders and physical distancing prompted the rapid testing of innovative policy, practice and service delivery that has resulted in some lasting improvements for children, most notably for youth transitioning to adulthood. The swift and decisive action taken by government during this time demonstrates that timely and responsive change is possible when it is a public priority.

⁶ The Data Innovation Program is a data integration and analytics program for government analysts and academic researchers. While every B.C. ministry collects and manages its own data, the Data Innovation Program securely links and de-identifies data from multiple ministries and organizations for better understanding of B.C.'s complex issues.



Examining Responsiveness

Examining Progress by Ministry

The 63 recommendations reviewed in this report are primarily directed to MCFD, MOH, MMHA and MECC. However, as the Representative calls for a more whole of government approach, recommendations have also been made to the Attorney General, Ministry of Housing, Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Citizens' Services, and the Mental Health Review Board.

Progress toward implementation varies by ministry, with MOH and MMHA demonstrating the least progress in response to recommendations. Both ministries have reported delays in implementing RCY recommendations due to the dual public health emergencies of the toxic drug supply and COVID-19, but a year-over-year analysis revealed inaction both before and after the pandemic. Instead, MOH and MMHA have prioritized the work of their own strategic priorities which aim to respond to problems identified by the Representative more generally, without addressing the specific calls for change. For example, MMHA's *A Pathway to Hope*⁷ aims to transform B.C.'s mental health and substance use services to a system based on wellness promotion, prevention and early intervention but has yet to address the rights of children detained under the *Mental Health Act* or the development of accessible mental health services for children and youth with disabilities.

Similarly, MCFD has made little progress toward implementing the Representative's recommendations as the bulk of its action planning prioritizes its own frameworks which are informed by, but do not address, RCY's specific calls for change. For example, in response to recommendations in *Skye's Legacy* to improve the sense of belonging for children and youth in care, the ministry reported progress toward Bill 38, *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act*, which has changed legislation to remove barriers for Indigenous Governing Bodies exercising jurisdiction. This is essential enabling legislation for the future, but has not addressed the immediate call for improvements for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children in care today, who are currently disconnected from their families, cultures and communities.

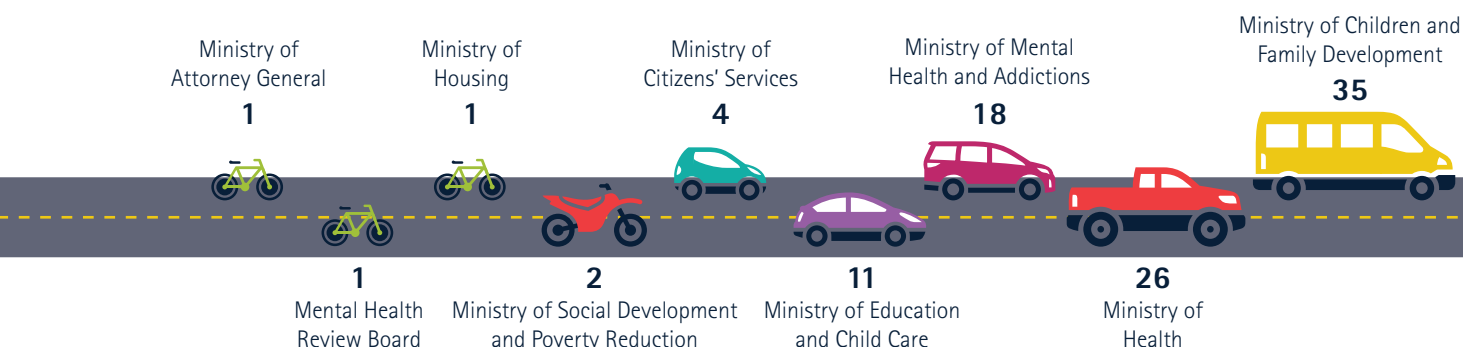
The Representative sees the MCFD, MOH and MMHA working hard to improve the child- and youth-serving system in the long-term, but has observed that there appears to be a lack of resources for policy makers to address both long term systemic change, alongside urgent, critical issues impacting families in B.C. Less than 17 per cent of total recommendations made to these three ministries have seen substantial progress or been completed since RCY began monitoring recommendations.

⁷ *Pathway to Hope: A roadmap for making mental health and addictions care better for people in British Columbia*. Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, 2019.



Table 2: Level of Progress by Public Body

Public Body	No Progress	Some Progress	Substantial Progress	Complete	Total
Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)	12	14	3	6	35
Ministry of Health (MOH)	17	7		2	26
Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA)	13	3		2	18
Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC)	2	4	3	2	11
Ministry of Citizens' Services	3	1			4
Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction	1	1			2
Ministry of Attorney General	1				1
Ministry of Housing		1			1
Mental Health Review Board		1			1



Note: A recommendation may be directed to multiple public bodies. For this reason this table will sum to more than 63.

The Ministries of Attorney General, Housing, Social Development and Poverty Reduction and Citizens’ Services are new to the recommendations process with RCY, as historically the bulk of recommendations from the Office have been aimed at MCFD. Since 2017, these ministries have taken on an enabling role to support the implementation of recommendations through legislation and policy development led by their ministries. Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Housing and Citizens’ Services have made some progress in their efforts to respond to RCY recommendations, while the Attorney General has yet to begin. Of the four recommendations with which these ministries are involved, one has seen some progress and three have seen no progress.

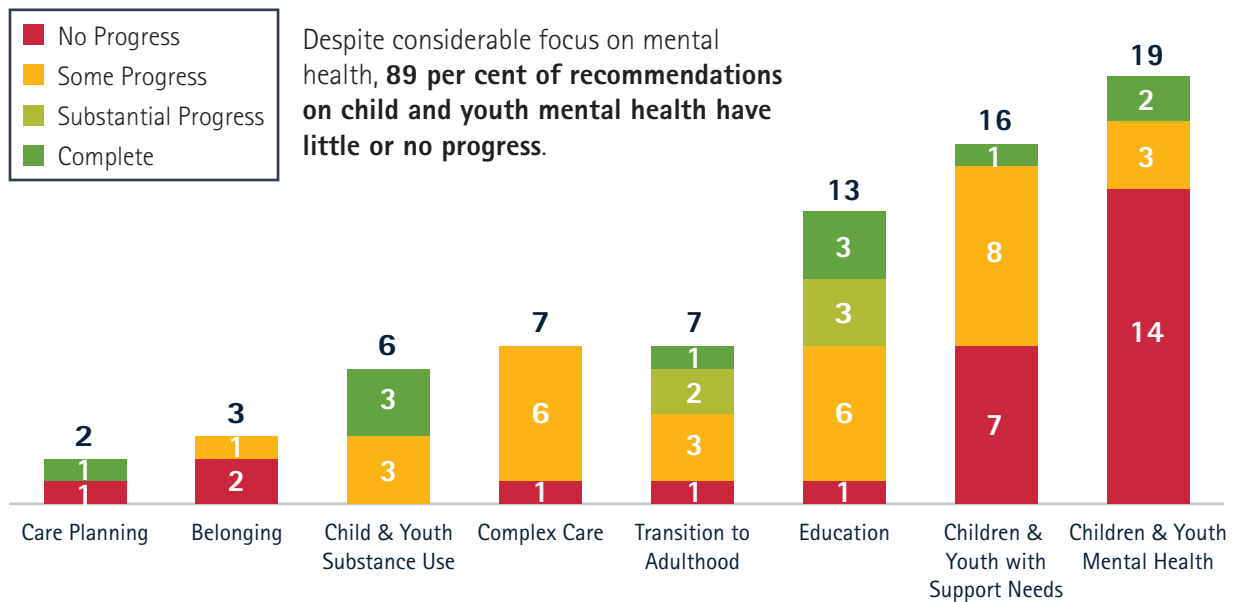


MECC and the Mental Health Review Board have taken a different approach to responding to the Representative’s recommendations, with specific action plans dedicated to the fulfillment of each recommendation. This has been a successful approach for MECC, with substantial progress and successful completion of five of 11, or 45 per cent, of recommendations. The most common delay found in MECC’s progress reporting is at the policy enactment stage. The Mental Health Review Board has found similar success with its dedicated action plan and is on schedule to complete the recommendations directed to that office within the timelines outlined by RCY.

Examining Progress by Service Line

Progress toward implementation also varies by service line, with child and youth mental health and children and youth with special needs seeing little in the way of change. Again, this is largely the result of stalled strategies and delayed frameworks, but also reveals a deeper concern about the lack of cross-government capacity for systemic change and the growing inequities in the care system. While there seems to be unanimous agreement that fundamental changes are needed to address the increasingly complex needs of children and youth, a lack of meaningful engagement, transparent communication and co-development at every level result in unnecessary delays for children and their families.

Level of progress by service area



Note: A recommendation may include more than one service area. For this reason, this figure will sum to more than 63.



■ No Progress
■ Some Progress
■ Substantial Progress
■ Complete

Examining Progress By Report⁸

Room for Improvement (2017)



This report highlighted major discrepancies in educational achievement between children and youth who are in care and those who are not. The report gathered input from more than 1,200 individuals including youth in and from care, teachers, social workers and foster parents to help identify areas where children and youth in care can be better supported in their educational achievement.

There were six recommendations made to address key areas, most notably calling for MECC to allocate specific funding for dedicated supports to each school district based on the number of children and youth in care. The Representative is pleased to see that half of the recommendations in this report were completed, but notes that implementation and the assessment of trauma-related needs of children and youth in care remained incomplete at the time of assessment.

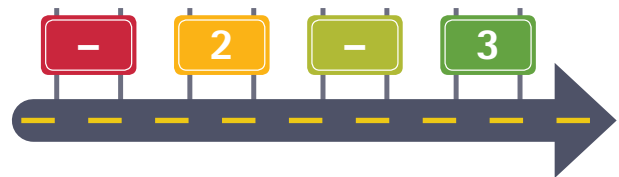


Time to Listen (2018)



This report highlighted that to effectively address youth substance use issues, the focus needs to be on helping youth to make safer choices around substance use, and on creating environments in which safer choices are possible and encouraged. The report offered a first-hand perspective of 100 young people in B.C. with lived experience and drew on lessons learned from an aggregate review of substance use-related injury and death reports.

The Representative has seen progress in practice development and youth engagement in response to her recommendations but, as of the last assessment, is still waiting for the implementation of youth-specific substance use and harm-reduction services capable of meeting the diverse needs of all youth.

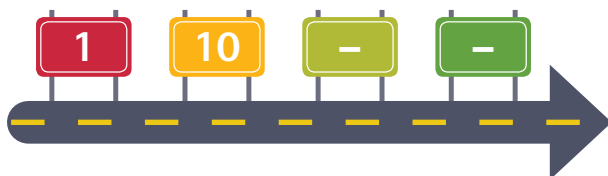


Alone and Afraid (2018)

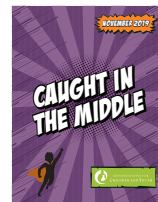


Alone and Afraid showed that B.C.'s system of services to support children with complex needs needed to be overhauled. The report detailed the events that led to the removal of a child from his mother's care after police found him alone, distressed, severely underweight and in a state of profound neglect.

At the posting of RCY's assessment, the Representative remains highly concerned with the lack of progress on the recommendations for children with complex needs, as government appears to remain stuck in the planning and pre-planning stages of change in response to her recommendations. The Representative notes that recommendation #3 saw a reversal of previous progress.



Caught in the Middle (2019)



Caught in the Middle is an investigative report examining the factors that led to the overdose death of a 17-year-old boy with complex needs who spent time in the child-serving systems of both B.C. and Alberta and was moved more than 40 times while in government care.

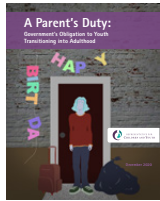
The Representative is encouraged to see the completion of recommendations relating to protocol review and the increase of resources for inter-provincial coordination. The Representative does, however, note particular concern with limited progress in recommendations for the implementation of trauma-informed resources, a new residential service model and approaches to children's self-identified ethnicity which relate to their desire for specific cultural supports and connection.



⁸ Annual progress reports are available on the RCY website: Recommendations - Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (rcybc.ca)



A Parent's Duty (2020)



This report highlighted the reality for youth transitioning out of the adolescent support system and into adulthood. It raised concerns over services that are scarce, inequitable, rigid and a poor fit for many diverse young people who turn 19 while in government care.

As of the first annual update, MCFD has implemented recommendations to evaluate emergency measures in place due to COVID-19 and has begun to implement youth transition workers. Cross-government recommendations, a key priority to coordinate services, have yet to see progress. These include dedicated housing for youth transitioning out of care and enhanced trauma-informed and culturally appropriate mental health and substance use services.



Excluded (2021)

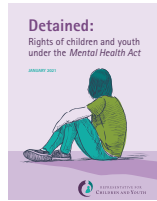


This report examined the experiences of children and youth with FASD and their families and revealed significant inequities in services, a general lack of understanding about this "invisible disorder" and structural racism against First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children, youth and families.

Upon reviewing the first update, the Representative is deeply concerned to see a response from government that does not reflect the whole-system approach she called for in her report and is frustrated to see little has changed for children and youth with FASD and their families more than a year after the release of her report. The Action Plan for this report has yet to be approved by the Representative.

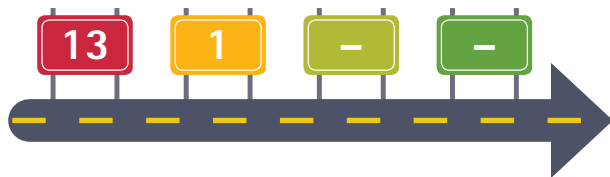


Detained (2021)

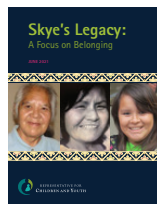


This report called for government to better protect the interests of children and youth involuntarily detained under the *Mental Health Act*, to explore the long-term impacts of involuntary detention on young people and to ensure youth are being made aware of their rights while detained.

As of the posting of this assessment, the Representative is extremely concerned with the lack of progress made by ministries in response to her recommendations. Most notably, MOH and MMHA have responded to calls for change with efforts to improve the voluntary care system and have not addressed the immediate and urgent calls to address the rights and well-being of children and youth currently detained under the Act.

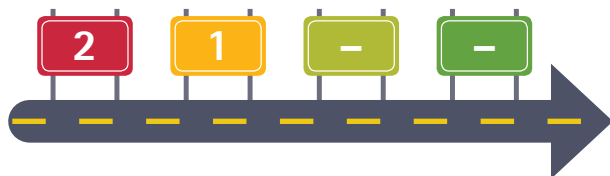


Skye's Legacy (2021)

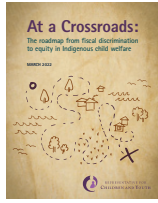


This report urged the B.C. government to focus on better helping First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children to realize the kind of deep and valuable connections that are too often damaged by the historic and ongoing effects of colonialism, ranging from residential schools and the Sixties Scoop to the current child welfare system.

Based on the materials provided to the Office, the Representative is concerned to see the lack of attention to cultural and family needs identified in her report, along with a limited commitment from MCFD to foster a sense of belonging and identity for all children in its care and particularly for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children.



At a Crossroads (2022)



This report sought to map child welfare funding and service delivery in B.C. and highlight funding practices by MCFD. In doing so, RCY discovered that MCFD's current funding approach mirrors the previous funding approach of the federal government that was found to be discriminatory. It also pointed out the need for the ministry to update its fiscal management system so that public funds allocated to First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous child welfare can be aligned with stated spending objectives and declared government and ministry priorities regarding reconciliation.

This report made three recommendations looking at approaches to funding and the collection of disaggregated race-based data.

The first-year progress report is due after March 31, 2023.

A Parent's Responsibility (2022)



This report showed that young people in government care in comparable jurisdictions to B.C. have dramatically higher rates of mental health disorders than the general population. The report was the first in a series of brief reports on mental health and wellness for children and youth.

The report included six recommendations looking at the role of the government and Indigenous Child and Family Services Agencies (ICFSAs) in serving children and youth with mental health needs.

The first-year progress report is due after Sept. 18, 2023.



Conclusion

Since RCY began fully monitoring the implementation of its recommendations in 2019, it has become clear that government is struggling to implement change. Government's own self-assessment of progress represents a failing grade, with annual reports detailing significant delays in public engagement and cross-ministry collaboration and challenges making the immediate rights and well-being of children and youth a top priority. The outcome of this inaction is seen daily in the injuries, deaths and individual advocacy issues reported to RCY, including recurrent patterns of systemic discrimination, rights violations, and inaccessible and uncoordinated care.

"Words don't change children's lives. Real action by the government and equality would."

—Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Gitksan First Nation advocate, scholar and Executive Director of the First Nations Caring Society of Canada

The Representative has noted substantial progress towards legislative changes in child welfare, data stewardship and reconciliation in her review, that are key enablers of long-term systemic change for children and families. Unfortunately, based on the current pace of implementation, she remains concerned that children impacted by inadequate, inaccessible or inconsistent services today will not see the impact of this important work during their childhood. It is the Representative's role to advocate with government to be more aware of and responsive to problems in the system and, at this time, more focused attention on action is called for. The Representative has heard from government that it *takes time* to make change, but the road to implementation is moving too slowly for many of B.C.'s most vulnerable children, youth, young adults and families due to organizational, systemic and structural barriers that could be addressed with a coordinated commitment to change.

The findings of this review also have implications for RCY. Recommendations made by the Office must be actionable and must be recognized as a priority by decision-makers. The delays identified on the road to implementation suggest that more work is needed by RCY, to support the system to be more responsive to calls for change. To enable this, the Representative will begin by expanding monitoring efforts to include more engagement with decision-makers and service providers, along with the introduction of new key performance indicators to track progress more closely and measure the impact of recommendations. The Representative will also explore opportunities to raise awareness about strategies and approaches that support as well as hinder government action and her role in addressing barriers to change.

The Representative, government and public bodies all agree that children, youth, young adults and families in B.C. deserve a robust, responsive, quality system of care. When we know better, we must do better. The road to that new system remains under construction. The roadmap to transformation must reflect the complexity of systemic and structural change, beginning with cross-ministry collaboration and collective investment to address the root causes of inequity, inaccessibility, inconsistent service quality, racism and discrimination experienced by B.C.'s children and families. It is the Representative's hope that, by identifying where progress gets stuck, we can all reflect on our responsibility to influence change and support the systemic transformation our children, youth, young adults and families are waiting for.



Appendix A – Recommendations and RCY assessed progress as of March 31, 2023

<i>Room for Improvement: Toward better education outcomes for children and youth in care</i> (last update provided by public bodies: March 2020)	Ministries Involved	Last Review	Overall Rating
Recommendation #1 That the Ministry of Education allocate specific funding to each school district based on the number of children and youth in care, funding that would be dedicated to support the learning of these students. This should be a priority of the ministry as it undertakes a review of the K to 12 education system's current funding formulas. Ministry of Education to implement specific funding to school districts for children and youth in care by September 2018.	Ministry of Education and Child Care	Third Update	Substantial Progress
Recommendation #2 That the Ministry of Education strengthen its accountability to improve and monitor supports for children and youth in care across the province, as well as tracking and reporting out on educational outcomes for these students. Ministry of Education to present Representative with draft plan to strengthen accountability for education of children and youth in care by January 2018. Ministry of Education to begin reporting publicly on educational outcomes of children and youth in care by September 2018.	Ministry of Education and Child Care	Third Update	Complete
Recommendation #3 That the Ministry of Education implement the Auditor General's 2015 recommendation that the ministry "collaborate with boards of education, superintendents, and Aboriginal leaders and communities to develop a shared, system-wide strategy with accountabilities to close the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student outcomes," and that this strategy includes specific actions to improve education outcomes of Indigenous children and youth in care.	Ministry of Education and Child Care	Third Update	Substantial Progress
Recommendation #4 That the Ministry of Education, school districts and MCFD work together to create positions dedicated to information-sharing, coordination and advocacy in support of education outcomes of children and youth in care. Ministry of Education and Ministry of Children and Family Development to have positions in place by September 2018.	Ministry of Education and Child Care, Ministry of Children and Family Development	Third Update	Complete
Recommendation #5 That MCFD ensure that an evidence-based approach is used to assess trauma-related needs for all children and youth coming into care and that, based on assessed needs, supports for recovery from trauma are implemented consistently across all care settings, including schools. Ministry of Children and Family Development to have assessments and subsequent supports in place by September 2019.	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Third Update	Some Progress
Recommendation #6 That MCFD facilitate by legislation or other means the authorization of caregivers to make decisions involving the participation of children and youth in care in age- and developmentally appropriate activities, including school activities that require written permission. This authorization should apply a reasonable and prudent parent standard and protect caregivers who follow this standard from liability. Ministry of Children and Family Development to have this change made by September 2018.	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Third Update	Complete



Time to Listen: Youth Voices on Substance Use (last update provided by public bodies: May 2022)	Ministries Involved	Last Review	Overall Rating
<p>Recommendation #1 That the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions ensure that a commitment to youth engagement is embedded in its Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, that the engagement accounts for the diversity of youth who use substances, and that youth feedback informs the implementation and evaluation of all substance use services.</p>	Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	Third Update	Complete
<p>Recommendation #2 That the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, lead the creation of an accessible and youth friendly single source of information about all publicly funded substance use services available in the province.</p> <p>The information source to be available by March 31, 2020, and updated annually, at minimum.</p>	Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Health	Third Update	Complete
<p>Recommendation #3 That the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the Ministry of Health – in association with other relevant partners – lead the development of, and ensure funding of, a comprehensive system of substance use services capable of consistently meeting the diverse needs of all youth in the context of the broader multi-sectoral continuum of care, with specific attention given to the development of culturally relevant and culturally safe services and supports for First Nations, Indigenous, Métis and Inuit youth and their families.</p> <p>The health authorities have a comprehensive system of substance use services for youth in place by April 2022.</p>	Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Health	Third Update	Some Progress
<p>Recommendation #4 That the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the Ministry of Health lead the development of and implementation of a full spectrum of youth-specific harm reduction services, including the creation of youth-specific spaces for supervised consumption that is embedded within a system of wraparound services and supports.</p> <p>The full spectrum of youth harm reduction services be in place by March 31, 2020.</p>	Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	Third Update	Some Progress
<p>Recommendation #5 That the Ministry of Children and Family Development, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and other relevant youth-serving organizations, develop a comprehensive training program for foster parents that addresses the context in which youth use substances and supports the development of skills to cultivate open and safe dialogue about substance use with youth.</p> <p>The training program be finalized by October 1, 2019, with training for all foster parents to begin immediately thereafter.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Health	Third Update	Complete



<i>Alone and Afraid: Lessons learned from the ordeal of a child with special needs and his family</i> (last update provided by public bodies: June 2022)	Ministries Involved	Last Review	Overall Rating
<p>Recommendation #1 That MCFD undertake a comprehensive assessment of the actual need for CYSN services across B.C. and the capacity of the current system to meet those needs. This assessment to examine funding, staffing levels and workloads, program delivery and wait times. Findings to be used to inform comprehensive service improvements so all eligible children with special needs and their families receive culturally respectful, appropriate and timely services and supports.</p> <p>MCFD to complete the comprehensive assessment and plan by the fall of 2019, seek necessary funding enhancements and begin implementation of changes by April 2020.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Third Update	Some Progress
<p>Recommendation #2 Pending completion of the comprehensive assessment, that MCFD take immediate steps to improve the current accessibility of CYSN services and supports by providing respite within a reasonable period of time, eliminating the need to choose between medical and respite benefits, and monitoring and ensuring follow-up with families not using autism funding.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Third Update	Some Progress
<p>Recommendation #3 That MCFD take the lead in working with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to develop an integrated service delivery model that enables appropriate information-sharing between service providers. This model would ensure that children and youth receiving special needs services through MCFD can be supported by a case coordinator who is responsible for navigating access to, and provision of, all necessary services. The case coordinator to remain assigned to the child to ensure appropriate services and facilitate successful transition to adulthood.</p> <p>MCFD to lead development of a comprehensive plan by the fall of 2019 and seek funding and begin implementation of the plan by April 2020.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Child Care	Third Update	No Progress (downgraded from Some Progress) ⁹
<p>Recommendation #4 That MCFD ensure its children and youth with special needs training is mandatory for child protection staff.</p> <p>MCFD to ensure that all child protection social workers complete training by April 2020.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Third Update	Some Progress
<p>Recommendation #5 That MCFD take steps to support child protection social workers to adhere to policy on response times to child protection reports and ensure children are seen during child protection investigations. This should include consideration of additional staffing, training and resources. MCFD to track adherence to these policies.</p> <p>MCFD to begin implementation of these changes by April 2019.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Third Update	Some Progress

⁹ Recommendation #3 from *Alone and Afraid* was reassessed as No Progress due to MCFD's pivot to a parent-driven model for information sharing meaning the ministry is no longer pursuing an Integrated Service Delivery model. The shift toward a parent-driven model means the actions taken no longer meet the intention of the recommendation.



<p>Recommendation #6 That MCFD and the Ministry of Education develop practice guidelines and a joint protocol to address concerns of unexplained school absences and withdrawals with the view to supporting children, youth and families and addressing barriers to school participation. MCFD and the Ministry of Education to conduct this work in consultation with advocates/stakeholders from the Indigenous and special needs communities.</p> <p>MCFD and the Ministry of Education to complete this work by May 2019.</p>	<p>Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Education and Child Care</p>	<p>Third Update</p>	<p>Some Progress</p>
<p>Recommendation #7 That the Ministry of Education establish mechanisms to enable local school districts to identify and do timely follow up when a school-age student is not registered in an educational program.</p> <p>Ministry of Education to complete this work by September 2020.</p>	<p>Ministry of Education and Child Care</p>	<p>Third Update</p>	<p>Some Progress</p>
<p>Recommendation #8 That the Ministry of Education determine how many students with special needs designations are being homeschooled and conduct a review to determine whether school districts should be offering additional support and guidance to these students.</p> <p>Ministry of Education to complete this work by September 2020.</p>	<p>Ministry of Education and Child Care</p>	<p>Third Update</p>	<p>Some Progress</p>
<p>Recommendation #9 That MCFD ensure identification and involvement of an Indigenous child or youth's family, community and culture at the first point of contact with any MCFD service and continue this involvement on an ongoing basis. This should include, in consultation with Indigenous stakeholders and communities, the creation of guidelines for social workers working with Indigenous families, including resources to help them do this work. MCFD to complete this work by May 2019.</p>	<p>Ministry of Children and Family Development</p>	<p>Third Update</p>	<p>Some Progress</p>
<p>Recommendation #10 That the Ministry of Health and MCFD develop a plan to ensure early identification, timely assessment and appropriate and accessible supports for children under six-years-old with signs of developmental delay.</p> <p>Plan to be developed by April 1, 2020 with implementation to begin immediately thereafter.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development</p>	<p>Third Update</p>	<p>Some Progress (downgraded from Substantial Progress)¹⁰</p>
<p>Recommendation #11 That the Ministry of Health take steps to incrementally decrease the wait times to three months for completed assessments of autism and complex behavioural developmental conditions across the province.</p> <p>Wait times to be reduced to nine months by Sept. 30, 2019; to six months by Sept. 30, 2020; and to three months by Sept. 30, 2021.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health</p>	<p>Third Update</p>	<p>Some Progress</p>

¹⁰ Recommendation #10 from *Alone and Afraid* was reassessed as Some Progress as activities toward implementation have been halted or significantly delayed.



Caught in the Middle (last update provided by public bodies: June 2022)	Ministries Involved	Last Review	Overall Rating
Recommendation #1 That the Ministry of Children and Family Development bring forward to the next review of the Protocol by the Directors of Child Welfare recommendations to address shortcomings. These include the addition of cultural planning to the Protocol; clarification that when a child arrives from another province or territory without notice, the dispute resolution process may be triggered; clarification about delegation of guardianship responsibilities; and an amendment to Interprovincial Agreement forms to allow for detail regarding financial expenditures and payment mechanisms.	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Second Update	Complete
Recommendation #2 That the Ministry of Children and Family Development fully dedicate an Interprovincial Coordinator who will work together with an adequately resourced network of regional analysts to support, track and monitor interprovincial cases. MCFD to put this network in place by December 2020.	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Second Update	Complete
Recommendation #3 That the Ministry of Children and Family Development create provincial practice guidelines or policies for interprovincial cases and develop an online training course that is required for staff who work on interprovincial cases. MCFD to complete this work by December 2020.	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Second Update	Substantial Progress
Recommendation #4 That the Ministry of Children and Family Development direct staff to speak with children in care about their ethnicity and desired cultural supports/connections and record the child's self-identified ethnicity in the ministry's case management system. MCFD to complete this step by June 2020.	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Second Update	No Progress (downgraded from Some Progress) ¹¹
Recommendation #5 That the Ministry of Children and Family Development ensure a trauma-informed method is implemented in resourcing decisions for children in its care who have experienced multiple adversities in their lives. MCFD to have this trauma-informed method to resourcing in place by June 2021.	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Second Update	Some Progress
Recommendation #6 As part of the Ministry of Children and Family Development's overhaul of residential services, MCFD to assess the need for residential care and treatment resources across the province to accommodate children with complex needs and to create sufficient resources to meet the assessed need in a timely way. MCFD to complete this work by September 2021.	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Second Update	Some Progress

¹¹ Recommendation #4 from *Caught in the Middle* was reassessed as No Progress due to MCFD halting its work toward this recommendation and given that information on ethnicity is not recorded in the ministry's case management system in a manner that allows for aggregate assessment.



A Parent's Duty: Government's Obligation to Youth Transitioning into Adulthood (last update provided by public bodies: July 2022)	Ministries Involved	Last Review	Overall Rating
<p>Recommendation #1 The Ministry of Children and Family Development should fully implement and proactively support and monitor effective practice in planning for transition into adulthood, beginning at least by age 14 for youth in continuing care and extending beyond age 19. Principles of this transition planning process should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Developmentally appropriate processes, aligned with the non-linear and complex process of transitioning to adulthood, and supporting the shift from dependence to interdependence, with relationships at the centre. b. Contextualization of the experience of Indigenous youth transitioning to adulthood within the experience of colonization and supporting the reclamation of culture and identity as critically important elements of the lives of emerging First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous young adults. c. Reciprocal processes, where youth agency is prioritized and youth are responsible and empowered to design a case plan representative of their goals, interests and support networks. MCFD is to have developed a comprehensive plan by April 1, 2022 that addresses policy and practice guidelines, staff training and processes and mechanisms for support and monitoring of practice, with full implementation of that plan in the ensuing 18 months. 	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	Substantial Progress
<p>Recommendation #2 In partnership with community agencies, MCFD should develop and implement a plan to establish dedicated youth transition workers to assist and support youth transitioning from care into adulthood. This plan should result in the province-wide (including rural and remote communities) implementation of dedicated transition workers who engage with young people before they turn 19 and provide systems navigation support, case management and adult guidance up to the age of 27 years. These professionals should work alongside a young person's natural systems of support and assist in providing mentorship and developmentally appropriate support. Supports should include a focus on skills development with the goal of education and employment.</p> <p>Particular attention should be paid to engaging transitional support workers who are First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous, as well as non-Indigenous workers who have received cultural safety and trauma awareness training to work respectfully with these young people.</p> <p>MCFD is to have completed policy and planning by April 1, 2022 and have completed full implementation of that plan in the ensuing 18 months.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	Substantial Progress
<p>Recommendation #3 In order to support the same gradual and extended transition to adulthood that most young people enjoy, MCFD should implement universal and comprehensive financial support for young people aging out of all types of care and out of Youth Agreements by automatically enrolling them on their 19th birthday in Agreements with Young Adults, unless the young person chooses to opt out. Universal support should continue until the young person's 27th birthday without restriction, subject to reasonable constraints such as consideration of other income.</p> <p>MCFD is to have developed a comprehensive plan by April 1, 2022 and fully implement that plan over the ensuing 18 months.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	Some Progress



<p>Recommendation #4 MCFD should evaluate the current emergency measures in place due to COVID-19 that allow young people to continue to stay in their foster home or staffed residential placements past their 19th birthday. Our Office anticipates that such an evaluation would reveal benefits and feasibility on an ongoing basis. If that is the case, the ministry should implement changes that would allow for continuing foster home or staffed residential care on a voluntary basis, with the length of extension based on the young person's readiness to transition out of care. Priority consideration should be given to youth and young adults who have disabilities and other physical and mental health needs who are not ready for independence at 19, and not eligible for Community Living BC services.</p> <p>MCFD is to complete the evaluation by December 31, 2021 and develop and implement an approved plan of next steps by April 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	Complete
<p>Recommendation #5 Provide additional dedicated housing for youth aging out of care. There is perhaps no greater challenge currently facing young people in B.C. transitioning into adulthood than finding appropriate, affordable and safe housing. We echo the recommendation made in the late Katherine McParland's report, <i>From Marginalized to Magnified: Youth Homelessness Solutions from those with Lived Expertise</i> – that the Ministry of Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing should work with BC Housing to develop and implement an aggressive plan to work toward ending youth homelessness in B.C., with particular attention to young adults who have transitioned from care. As part of this plan, additional dedicated housing units should be provided for young people aging out of care. Units on a continuum of support – including with mental health and addictions supports where needed – should be available and eligibility requirements reduced.</p> <p>BC Housing is to develop a comprehensive plan by April 1, 2022 and begin full implementation of that plan thereafter.</p>	Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Citizens' Services	First Update	Some Progress
<p>Recommendation #6 The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and MCFD, should develop and implement a plan for mental health and substance use services for youth in care who are transitioning to adulthood. The plan should be developed in consultation with appropriate First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous representatives as well as young people with lived experience.</p> <p>This plan should be integrated into <i>A Pathway to Hope</i>. It should specifically address the needs of the population of young people leaving care and the specialized services they need due to the inequities, adversities and trauma they have experienced in their lives before and while in care. The plan and all services should be trauma-informed and give particular attention and priority to First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous young people transitioning to adulthood.</p> <p>The plan is to be developed by April 1, 2022, with full implementation being completed within the ensuing two years.</p>	Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	Some Progress
<p>Recommendation #7 In order to ensure high quality and equitable services, there must be ongoing data collection and evaluation. MCFD should engage the Ministry of Citizens' Services and relevant ministries and public bodies to develop and implement a plan that enables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> longitudinal data collection about young people who have aged out of care in British Columbia evaluation of post-majority services and supports and the public sharing of the evaluation results standardized data across the province that is reported regularly, including (but not limited to) the following disaggregated data: identity factors such as ethnicity and gender identity as well as indigeneity – First Nations, Métis and Inuit identity. <p>A cross-ministry plan is to be developed by April 1, 2022 with full implementation of that plan to begin thereafter.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Citizens' Services	First Update	No Progress



<i>Detained: Rights of children and youth under the Mental Health Act</i> (last update provided by public bodies: February 2022)	Ministries Involved	Last Review	Overall Rating
<p>Recommendation #1 That the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions work with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Children and Family Development to conduct a review, after consulting with health authorities, First Nations, Métis Nation and urban Indigenous communities and leadership and other appropriate bodies, into the use of involuntary mental health care for children and youth to identify the conditions that are contributing to its increased use, and identify immediate opportunities to provide voluntary interventions or improve practices that would reduce involuntary admissions.</p> <p>Review to be complete by Jan. 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #2 That the Ministry of Health require health authorities to collect and report key information pertaining to children and youth admitted under the <i>Mental Health Act</i> in a way that is standardized across the province and reported regularly, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identity factors (ethnicity, gender identity) • Indigeneity – First Nations, Métis and Inuit identity • standardized length of stay data across all hospital settings • admissions of children on a voluntary basis at the request of their parents • requests for, and outcomes of, second medical opinions • detailed seclusion and restraint data • data related to extended leave • outcomes related to quality of care, effectiveness and patient satisfaction. <p>This work to be completed by June 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Health	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #3 That the Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the health authorities, review and reconcile s.20(a)(ii) of the <i>Mental Health Act</i> that permits the designated director to admit a child under 16 on a voluntary basis at the request of their parent or guardian with the mature minor doctrine.</p> <p>Review to be complete by Jan. 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #4 That the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions actively engage and consult with First Nations, Métis Nation and urban Indigenous health bodies and leadership to develop a process to enable a child or youth to notify their community or Nation of their involuntary admission.</p> <p>To be complete by Sept. 1, 2021.</p>	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #5 That the Attorney General, in partnership with the Ministries of Health and Mental Health and Addictions, ensure that an independent body is notified every time a child or youth is detained under the <i>Mental Health Act</i> and that this body is mandated to provide rights advice and advocacy to children and youth.</p> <p>Independent body to be in place by Dec. 1, 2021.</p>	Attorney General	First Update	No Progress



<p>Recommendation #6 That the Ministry of Health in co-operation with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the health authorities assess the appropriateness and accessibility of the information currently provided to children and youth and develop new information using multiple formats and media to better support young people to understand what's happening to them and what their rights and options are when detained under the <i>Mental Health Act</i>. Youth with lived expertise to be engaged to advise on the information that is most helpful and how best to make information available to children and youth.</p> <p>Information to be developed by Dec. 1, 2021.</p>	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #7 That the Ministry of Health work with the health authorities to develop a process to ensure that First Nations, Métis or Inuit children or youth who are either detained under the <i>Mental Health Act</i> or are under 16 and admitted by their parent/legal guardian are offered services by hospital staff who assist Indigenous patients such as navigators, liaison nurses, nurse practitioners and Elders in residence.</p> <p>Process to be developed and operational by Jan. 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Health	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #8 That the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions put forward amendments to the <i>Mental Health Act</i> after actively engaging and consulting with health authorities, First Nations, Métis Nation and urban Indigenous communities and leadership and other appropriate bodies, that will ensure children and youth who are detained under the <i>Mental Health Act</i> have the right to retain personal items that do not pose a risk to their safety or the safety of others and continue practices that support their physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and relational well-being and their sense of identity.</p> <p>Amendments to be put forward by May 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #9 That the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the First Nations Health Authority actively engage and consult with First Nations, Métis Nation and urban Indigenous leadership and communities to identify changes needed in order to ensure that First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous children and youth are provided with trauma-informed, culturally safe and attuned mental health services, including a diversity of treatment modalities specific to their unique culture, when detained under the <i>Mental Health Act</i>.</p> <p>Changes to be identified by Sept. 1, 2021 and implemented in full by Sept. 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #10 That the Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the health authorities, undertake a comprehensive review of practices for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> children under 16 who have been "voluntarily" admitted, and take all necessary legal and administrative measures to ensure that "mature minor" capacity assessments are carried out where treatment is proposed, that the results of those assessments are recorded, and that physicians understand their duty to comply with the views of a mature minor regarding treatment, subject only to the order of a court. children assessed as mature minors who have been involuntarily admitted, and take all necessary legal and administrative measures to ensure that (i) despite the deemed consent provisions, the views of the young person are obtained, recorded and carefully considered before treatment decisions are made, and (ii) treatment information is conveyed in a manner that children and youth may understand. <p>Review to be complete by March 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	First Update	No Progress



<p>Recommendation #11 That the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions put forward amendments to the <i>Mental Health Act</i> after actively engaging and consulting with health authorities, First Nations, Métis Nation and urban Indigenous communities and leadership and other appropriate bodies to ensure that, for children and youth who are detained under the <i>Mental Health Act</i>, isolation and restraint are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only used as a last resort when all other interventions have been exhausted, and • only used in accordance with specific legislative or regulatory criteria including assessment, time limits, reviews, documentation and reporting requirements. <p>Amendments to be put forward by May 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #12 That the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions conduct an evidence-informed and outcomes-based review of extended leave for children and youth who are detained under the <i>Mental Health Act</i> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the effectiveness of extended leave as a mental health intervention for children and youth, and • if extended leave is determined to be effective, review the need for additional legislative or regulatory criteria and oversight mechanisms, and review the extent to which children and youth are aware of and exercise their rights on extended leave. <p>Review to be complete by Jan. 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #13 That the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions put forward amendments to the <i>Mental Health Act</i> after actively engaging and consulting with health authorities, First Nations, Métis Nation and urban Indigenous communities and leadership and other appropriate bodies to create mandatory periodic Mental Health Review Board reviews for (i) involuntarily detained children and youth, and (ii) children under 16 who are admitted at the request of their parents, to ensure that such reviews do not depend on the child's knowledge or ability to make such a request. Mandatory reviews should only be conducted with the consent of the child or youth or their representative.</p> <p>Amendments to be put forward by May 1, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #14 That the Mental Health Review Board pilot a new Review Board hearing process for children and youth that centres the young person and is trauma-informed and culturally attuned after actively engaging and consulting with health authorities, First Nations, Métis Nation and urban Indigenous communities and leadership and other appropriate bodies.</p> <p>Pilot to be operational by Oct. 1, 2022.</p>	Mental Health Review Board	First Update	Some Progress



Excluded: Increasing Understanding, Support, and Inclusion for Children with FASD and their Families (last update provided by public bodies: MECC May 2022, MCFD July 2022)	Ministries Involved	Last Review	Overall Rating
<p>Recommendation #1 That the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) fully fund and implement a CYSN service framework and plan, fully inclusive of children and youth with FASD. The formation of the service framework and plan must extensively engage Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs) and all appropriate partners. This framework must articulate a comprehensive and accessible array of CYSN services, delivered based on both an assessment of functional needs and diagnosis and, therefore, fully including children and youth affected by FASD.</p> <p>MCFD to begin implementation by Sept. 30, 2021 and complete full implementation of the CYSN service framework and plan over a three-year period ending March 31, 2024.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #2 Pending full implementation of Recommendation 1, that MCFD immediately include suspected or confirmed FASD, based on an assessment of functional needs, in the eligibility criteria for CYSN Family Support Services, thereby allowing children and youth with FASD and their families to access services available to others with specific neuro-developmental conditions. The ministry should seek appropriate funding to expand the capacity of these services to adequately support the number of newly eligible FASD families so that this recommended expansion of service eligibility does not lead to reduced services or longer wait lists for other CYSN families.</p> <p>MCFD to secure immediate funding enhancements and begin implementation of the expanded eligibility criteria by Sept. 30, 2021.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #3 MCFD to complete a comprehensive review of evidence-based and promising practices specific to serving children and youth with FASD, including from the Key Worker Parent Support Program, for integration into the CYSN framework. In the meantime, MCFD to take immediate action to ensure that the KWPSP has consistent quality service across all regions of B.C. and is accessible to all families of children and youth with FASD.</p> <p>MCFD to take immediate action to ensure equitability and accessibility of the KWPSP by Sept. 30, 2021 and complete the best practice review by March 30, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #4 As a first step toward realizing fundamental changes in practice that address racism, stigma and bias, MCFD, in collaboration with DAAs, community service agencies and caregivers, to conduct a review of existing FASD awareness training and the training needs of all front-line staff working with children and youth with FASD. MCFD, working with DAAs, to use this review to support the development of evidence-based, culturally attuned and regularly updated training materials that ground a required training program for current staff across the range of MCFD service lines and, in particular, CYMH, CYSN, child welfare and youth justice. This awareness training should then be incorporated into basic entry training for newly hired staff and made accessible to community service agencies and caregivers.</p> <p>MCFD to complete the reviews and curriculum development and begin training by March 31, 2022 and complete training of all relevant ministry and agency staff by March 31, 2023.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	No Progress



<p>Recommendation #5 That the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA), in collaboration with MCFD, DAAs and the Ministry of Health, lead a review, and develop and implement a plan, to provide effective and accessible mental health services for children and youth with special needs, including FASD. This should include a review of evidence-based, culturally attuned and promising practice models of therapy, intervention and care for children and youth with special needs including FASD, who have mental health impacts, as well as an assessment of current resourcing and resource gaps. The findings of this review and planning should be prioritized and built into MMHA's Pathway to Hope for implementation.</p> <p>MMHA to complete the review and plan by March 31, 2022, with MCFD and Health beginning the implementation of new service approaches and enhanced services by Oct. 1, 2023, and completing implementation by March 31, 2024.</p>	<p>Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Health</p>	<p>First Update</p>	<p>No Progress</p>
<p>Recommendation #6 That the Ministry of Health incrementally reduce wait times for complex developmental behavioural conditions (CDBC) diagnostic clinics, and also secure additional resources to provide for periodic follow-up assessments, at key development stages from infancy through to adolescence.</p> <p>The Ministry of Health to reduce wait times to nine months by March 31, 2022; to six months by March 31, 2023; to three months by March 31, 2024; and thereafter increase capacity to provide for follow-up assessments.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health</p>	<p>First Update</p>	<p>No Progress</p>
<p>Recommendation #7 That the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the First Nations Health Authority and with guidance from the Task Team formed as a result of the <i>In Plain Sight</i> report, apply learnings from the review of systemic bias to referral pathways and assessment processes for CDBC diagnostic clinics. The changes/improvements should specifically address the issue of bias with regard to the referrals of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth for FASD assessments and ASD assessments.</p> <p>Ministry of Health to complete the review and implement recommended improvements by March 31, 2022.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health</p>	<p>First Update</p>	<p>Some Progress</p>
<p>Recommendation #8 That the Ministry of Health conduct an assessment of existing FASD awareness training and the training needs of appropriate front-line staff working with children and youth with FASD, leading to the development of evidence-based, culturally attuned, Nation-specific and regularly updated training materials that ground a mandatory training program for current staff across the range of health services.</p> <p>Ministry of Health to complete the assessment of existing FASD awareness training by March 31, 2022. Sequentially, the Ministry of Health to identify appropriate priority front-line providers to receive training, by Sept. 30, 2022, and develop training and access to training by Sept. 30, 2023.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health</p>	<p>First Update</p>	<p>Some Progress</p>



<p>Recommendation #9 MCFD together with the Ministry of Citizens' Services to initiate the development of a cross-ministry plan, in collaboration with the ministries of Health, MMHA, Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and Education, and in association with DAAs, health authorities and Community Living BC, to routinely collect high-quality demographic and service data that allows for disaggregation, providing an essential foundation for more effective policy development, program provision and service monitoring for children and youth with special needs and their families, including those with FASD who are receiving services from these public bodies.</p> <p>The cross-ministry plan to be completed and implemented by April 1, 2022 and fully implemented by March 31, 2024.</p>	<p>Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Citizens' Services, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Ministry of Education and Child Care</p>	<p>First Update</p>	<p>No Progress</p>
<p>Recommendation #10 That the Ministry of Education update its Inclusive Education Policy and supporting documents and incorporate information to increase awareness and understanding of the specific learning needs of children and youth with FASD and related disorders into the supporting documents.</p> <p>Ministry of Education to update Inclusive Education Policy and supporting documents and incorporate information to enhance awareness of FASD and related disorders by Sept. 1, 2021.</p>	<p>Ministry of Education and Child Care</p>	<p>First Update</p>	<p>Some Progress</p>
<p>Recommendation #11 That the Ministry of Education work with the British Columbia Council for Administrators for Inclusive Supports in Education (BC CAISE) to support staff training and development needs for educators and school staff who work with children and youth with FASD or suspected FASD, and their families, and build on evidence-based and promising practice approaches to better support inclusion and improved learning outcomes for children and youth with FASD.</p> <p>Ministry of Education to work with BC CAISE and partners to support the implementation of staff training and development to better support inclusion and improved learning outcomes for children and youth with FASD and related disorders by Sept. 1, 2022.</p>	<p>Ministry of Education and Child Care</p>	<p>First Update</p>	<p>Substantial Progress</p>



Skype's Legacy: A Focus on Belonging (last update provided by public bodies: September 2022)	Ministries Involved	Last Review	Overall Rating
<p>Recommendation #1 MCFD to conduct a systemic needs analysis of cultural and family support resources required to ensure that social workers are better supported to promote a sense of belonging and identity for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous children and youth in care in relation to their families, culture and cultural community over time and at different stages in their lives and identity development. This review will inform the development of a longer-term resourcing and implementation plan. However, given the urgent need to address the significant over-involvement of the child welfare system in the lives of Indigenous children and families and poor outcomes for Indigenous children in the child welfare system, a substantive investment of new resources should be made immediately that can be considered a down payment on the resources identified for the longer term plan.</p> <p>Funding for immediate and substantive new resources to be secured and implementation to begin no later than April 1, 2022.</p> <p>Needs analysis and resourcing plan to be completed by Sept. 30, 2022 with longer-term, sustained funding secured and implementation of new resources beginning by April 1, 2023.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #2 That MCFD conduct a comprehensive review and revision of all relevant care-planning and case management standards, policies, practice guidelines and training materials with the goal of aligning those materials with the dimensions of belonging, as described in this report. (See Appendix F in <i>Skype's Legacy</i> for areas the Representative has identified for possible policy amendments.)</p> <p>Revisions of all relevant materials to be completed by March 31, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	No Progress
<p>Recommendation #3 In the interest of improving practice, that MCFD distribute <i>Skype's Legacy: A Focus on Belonging</i> to all staff who work with and plan for children and youth who are in care or who may come into care, and then meaningfully engage in discussions with those staff about belonging for children and youth in the context of case planning, decision-making and the development and implementation of care plans.</p> <p>These discussions should be informed by the Circle practices developed in the APPF in order to foster strength-based, holistic and restorative work that centres child and youth well-being and belonging and should be designed to promote thoughtful reflection and enhance understanding. This process of engagement should not be a one-time process and should occur regularly to support strong practice development and reflection.</p> <p>Report dissemination to be completed by Aug. 31, 2021 and initial Circle discussions to be completed by March 31, 2022.</p>	Ministry of Children and Family Development	First Update	Some Progress



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