



CHILD AND
FAMILY SERVICES

Quality
Improvement Plan
and the Strategic
Approach to
System Reform

April 2022 | Avril 2022

2019-2021

SERVICES À L'ENFANCE
ET À LA FAMILLE

Plan d'amélioration
de la qualité
et approche
stratégique pour
la réforme du
système



If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

English

Si vous voulez ces informations dans une autre langue officielle, contactez-nous.

French

Kīspin ki nitawihītīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsīnān.

Cree

Tłıchq yati k'è è. Dı wegodi newq dè, gots'ò gone de.

Tłıchq

ᑭerihł'ís Dēne Sų́íné yati t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyati theᑭą ᑭat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yóftı.

Chipewyan

Edı gondı dehgáh got'ı e zhatié k'é é edat'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahı.

South Slavey

K'áhshó got'ı ne xadä k'é hederı ᑭedı htl'é yerınıwę ní dé dúle.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijāch'uu zhit yinothan jı', diits'àt ginohkhı.

Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqłuta.

Inuvialuktun

Ćᑭd ı ııᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ, ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ.

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarłutit.

Inuinnaqtun

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Executive Summary

The 2019-2021 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is a comprehensive action plan that was developed to guide the Child and Family Services (CFS) system in improving key areas of service delivery. These key areas were identified through previous CFS action plans, engagement activities, and internal and external quality assurance processes. The QIP consists of 70 action items within 10 priority areas of service delivery and system structure.

In the interest of transparency, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) has publicly communicated progress updates on a quarterly basis for each of the 70 action items. These status updates are available on the DHSS website and were shared directly with Indigenous governments, staff, and key stakeholders. The latest update of the QIP was released in December 2021. Despite challenges presented as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the dynamic responses these required, there has been steady progress made in transforming the CFS system over the past three years to better meet the needs of children and youth.

Child and Family Services is committed to maintaining momentum gained through the QIP and implementing a culturally safe and anti-racism approach to continue to improve outcomes for those who access and receive services. In April 2022, the QIP will evolve into a one-year action plan. This action plan will function as a “bridge

plan” and link the 2019-2021 QIP with a plan for system reform initiatives. This one-year action plan will oversee the progress of 12 action items that build on the work completed during the QIP. It will also set the foundation for this work to be expanded on in the approach to CFS system reform that is anticipated to be released in 2023.

The need for system reform has been long identified as necessary to begin addressing the impacts of colonization within CFS policies and practices. Child and Family Services recognizes that reconciliation requires engagement with Indigenous communities and that Indigenous voices must guide the process. As such, the development of the plan for system reform will be inclusive of knowledge from Indigenous governments and communities, staff, stakeholders, as well as utilize information gathered from current system quality assurance processes.

This report provides a review of the background of the QIP, a summary of status updates, and key highlights on work accomplished throughout the three-year period. An overview of what is anticipated to be accomplished over the course of 2022-2023 CFS Action Plan will also be shared, as well as the broader plan for system reform.





Sommaire

Le Plan d'amélioration de la qualité (PAQ) pour 2019-2021 est un plan d'action détaillé visant à aider le système des Services à l'enfance et à la famille à améliorer les domaines prioritaires de prestation de services aux enfants et aux familles. Ces secteurs clés ont été définis dans le cadre des plans d'action précédents des Services à l'enfance et à la famille, des activités de mobilisation et des processus d'assurance de la qualité internes et externes. Le PAQ comprend 70 mesures dans 10 domaines prioritaires touchant à la prestation de services et à la structure du système.

À des fins de transparence, le ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) a communiqué publiquement des mises à jour trimestrielles quant aux progrès réalisés pour chacune des 70 mesures. Ces mises à jour sont accessibles sur le site Web du MSSS et ont été partagées directement avec les gouvernements autochtones, le personnel et les principaux intervenants. La dernière mise à jour du PAQ a été publiée en décembre 2021. Malgré les défis posés par la pandémie de COVID-19 et l'intervention dynamique qu'elle exige, des progrès constants ont été réalisés dans la transformation du système des Services à l'enfance et à la famille au cours des trois dernières années afin de mieux répondre aux besoins des enfants et des jeunes.

Les Services à l'enfance et à la famille sont déterminés à maintenir l'élan acquis grâce au PAQ et à utiliser une approche qui lutte contre le racisme et respecte la culture afin de continuer à améliorer les résultats pour les prestataires de services ainsi que pour les bénéficiaires. À compter d'avril 2022, le PAQ deviendra un plan à durée déterminée d'un an. Ce plan d'action servira de « plan de transition »

et établira un pont entre les objectifs du PAQ pour 2019-2021 et le plan d'initiatives en matière de réforme du système. Ce plan d'action d'une durée d'un an permettra de superviser l'avancement de 12 mesures qui reposent sur le travail effectué au cours du PAQ. Il jettera également les bases permettant d'approfondir les travaux dans le cadre de l'approche pour le plan de réforme du système des Services à l'enfance et à la famille dont la publication est prévue en 2023.

Le constat a été établi depuis longtemps de la nécessité d'une réforme du système pour commencer à atténuer les répercussions de la colonisation au sein des politiques et des pratiques des Services à l'enfance et à la famille. Les Services à l'enfance et à la famille reconnaissent que la réconciliation nécessite la consultation des communautés autochtones et que les voix autochtones doivent guider ce processus. À cet égard, l'élaboration du plan de réforme du système des Services à l'enfance et à la famille tiendra compte des connaissances des gouvernements et des communautés autochtones, du personnel et des intervenants, et utilisera les renseignements recueillis dans le cadre des processus actuels d'assurance de la qualité du système.

Ce rapport fournit un aperçu du contexte du PAQ, un résumé des mises à jour de l'état d'avancement et les principaux points saillants du travail accompli au cours de la période triennale. Un aperçu de ce qui devrait être accompli au cours du plan d'action 2022-2023 des Services à l'enfance et à la famille est également partagé, ainsi que le plan plus large de la réforme du système.

Introduction

Child and Family Services is responsible for providing support, family preservation, and protection services to children, youth, and families in the Northwest Territories. Child and Family Services strives to ensure that regardless of the service provided, individuals receive quality supports that effectively meet their needs. Continuous improvement to these services is a priority of the CFS system and each initiative works towards the long-term outcome of addressing inequities and the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care.

In 2019, CFS released a three-year QIP which provided direction on how DHSS and the three Authorities (Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, and Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency), would work together to improve the CFS system. The QIP built on existing work accomplished under the *CFS Building Stronger Families Action Plan*, supporting the management, resourcing, and structuring of the CFS system and ensuring sustainability of the significant changes completed through this previous action plan. The full 2019-2021 Quality Improvement Plan can be found here:

<https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/quality-improvement-plan>



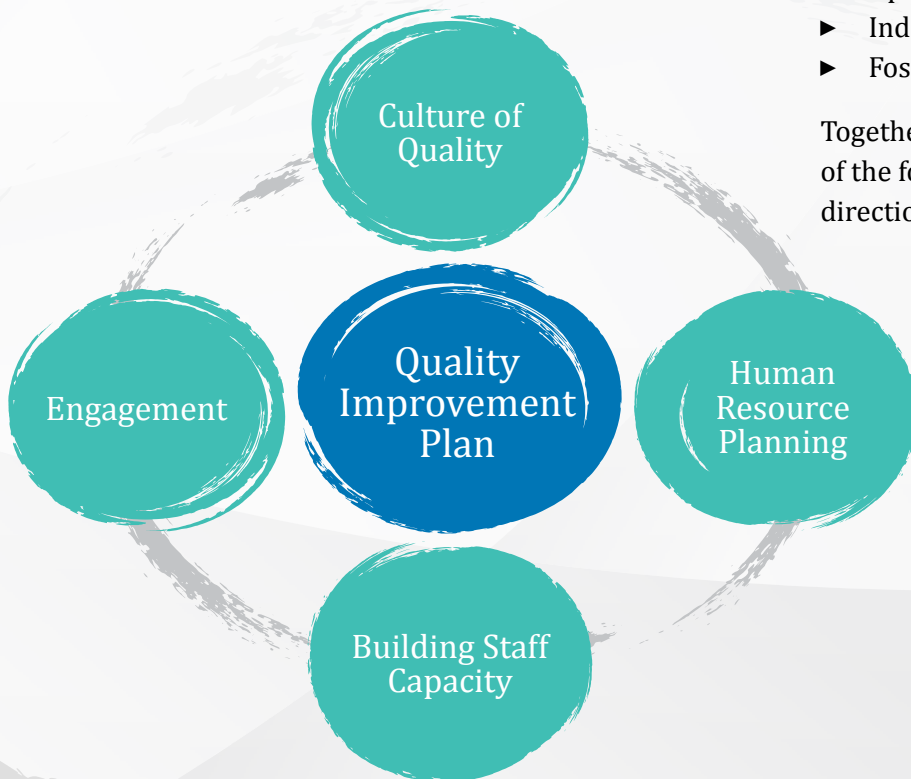
“CFS strives to ensure that regardless of the service provided, individuals receive quality supports that effectively meet their needs.”

Development and Implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan

At the onset of the development of the QIP, CFS's goal was to offer more effective services to children, youth, and families that addressed their needs at the time they were identified. To ensure the QIP focused on key areas that would have the most significant impact on the effectiveness of services offered to families, CFS prioritized obtaining input and feedback from a variety of sources. These sources included the following:

- ▶ *2018 October Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly: Child and Family Services – Department of Health and Social Services and Health and Social Services Authorities;*
- ▶ Initiatives from the *Building Stronger Families Action Plan* which required further attention;
- ▶ Regional and Authority 2016/17 Child and Family Services Audit Reports and Action Plans;
- ▶ Child and Family Services internal Quality Reviews;
- ▶ Staff Engagement Activities (i.e., Child and Family Services Staff Suggestion Box, all Staff Teleconferences, Quality Committee and Working Group Meetings);
- ▶ Standing Committee on Government Operations;
- ▶ Indigenous Government Leaders; and
- ▶ Foster Family Coalition (FFC) of the NWT.

Together, these sources led to the development of the four pillars which guided the strategic direction of the QIP:



- ▶ Culture of Quality: Enhancing services to further reflect cultural safety and best practice principles
- ▶ Human Resource Planning: Making sure the right people are in the right places
- ▶ Building Staff Capacity: Investing in our staff
- ▶ Engagement: Drawing on the knowledge and experience of others

Guided by these four strategic directions, the QIP identified 10 priority areas in which the CFS System would concentrate its efforts. These 10 priority areas included:

System Improvements	Prevention Services
Cultural Safety and Respect	Foster Care Services
Investigations	Structured Decision Making®
Case Management	Permanency Planning
Specialized Placement Services	Accountability Structure

Within these 10 areas, CFS committed to a range of initiatives intended to better the service system and improve key outcomes for children and families in the NWT.

Over the past three years, the Department worked closely with the three Authorities to carry out these initiatives. The CFS system also worked closely with new and existing partners, Indigenous governments, staff, and those accessing CFS services, to ensure that each initiative remained relevant and responsive to improving the outcomes of families accessing services.

As such, the QIP, designed to be a living document, was to evolve over time. As initiatives were completed, they were built upon to support the system in continuing momentum towards ongoing improvement. For example, in 2020 the QIP was amended in response to the release of the federal government’s *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families* as new

action items were embedded to ensure the CFS system progressed in a way that more closely aligned with the principles outlined in the Act.

With a commitment to accountability and transparency, CFS released updates on a quarterly basis as well as maintained an online progress tracker that provided the public with up-to date progress on each of the 70 action items of the QIP. The progress tracker can be viewed on the DHSS website: <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/quality-improvement-plan>. In addition to making this information publicly available, CFS directly communicated updates to stakeholders, Indigenous governments, and staff.

Key Highlights

During the planning process for the QIP, CFS recognized that system improvement would be a continuous process. Over the course of the three years, much attention was given to completing initiatives with the goal of bringing the system to a place where the system was strengthened, adaptable and responsive to the changing needs of children, youth, and families. In some cases, this foundational work is still in progress and will continue to be actioned in the next generation of planning for the system.

The most recent update of the QIP was released in December 2021. At the time of this update, the majority (57.1%) of action items were completed. Those defined as “on track” (38.6%) are areas where the core of the work was completed and, as the work is continuous, is now embedded as part of ongoing system features of CFS. Two action items were delayed in their completion and work on one action item was paused until further notice. Rationale for these status updates is provided in the section “Review and Re-assessment of Initiatives”.

The QIP guided initiatives that have led to a stronger, more consistent and accessible system that is responsive to the needs of children, youth and families. Meeting the deliverables of the majority of initiatives allows for CFS to be well-positioned to further evolve the system in future key areas that will continue to improve outcomes for families and communities.

An in-depth analysis of initiatives actioned under the QIP will be completed over the next year. This analysis will include reviewing key indicators and data gathered through quality assurance processes and feedback from families, Indigenous communities, staff, and stakeholders over the last three-years. In the interim, the following pages include a summary of key highlights of completed action items of the QIP, according to the four underlying strategic directions. Work completed under each direction is meant to have contributed to better experience and outcomes for families accessing CFS services.

“The QIP guided initiatives that led to a stronger, more consistent and accessible system that is responsive to the needs of children, youth and families.”





Human Resource Planning

An improved human resource system leads to greater stability and consistency in the provision of services. With an increase in equitable staffing resources, streamlined oversight processes and reduced vacancy rates, families can depend on a more consistent staffing complement leading to more consistent and effective services.

✓ Key investments in the CFS system introduced 57 new positions to support service delivery across the NWT. New positions were created to increase frontline capacity in the areas of family preservation, placement services, and supervisory support, as well as the development of training initiatives.

✓ Child and Family Services actively engaged in activities to recruit and retain a representative workforce at all levels of the system. A staff recruitment model was developed to support the concurrent filling of positions across the system.

✓ Child and Family Services began collecting and tracking data to monitor workforce capacity.

- ▶ Regional vacancy rates are now gathered on a quarterly basis to monitor ongoing fluctuations in the workforce;
- ▶ A Caseload Measurement Analysis is now completed twice a year to monitor caseloads within each region. The caseload analysis process has allowed for better understanding of the workload

in different communities and regions. This has also led to the diversification of workforce through the introduction of family preservation workers and increase in Foster Care and Adoption Worker positions across the NWT.

✓ NTHSSA completed changes to the organizational structure to promote a consistent approach to CFS service delivery across the NWT. These changes intersect and align with the delivery of CFS by the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency and Hay River Health and Social Services Authority. The Department continues to maintain oversight of the CFS system and intersection across all three Authorities.

✓ In collaboration with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, CFS co-funded the Foster Family Coalition of the NWT to pilot a youth in care network virtually through the GLOW (“Gaining Life Skills OUR Way”) over a two-year period.



Building Staff Capacity

Building staff capacity through training and professional development leads to a strengthened workforce with increased skills and knowledge to deliver quality and effective services to children, youth, and families.

- ✓ The Department and NTHSSA created and filled positions responsible for informing the inclusion of culturally safe and anti-racism principles into CFS practice and policies. The Departmental position of Senior Advisor, Culturally Safe Child and Family Services, is a collaboration with the Community, Culture, and Innovation Division to ensure CFS is guided by current cultural safety and anti-racism wise practices.
- ✓ Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many initiatives related to building staff capacity were amended in response to the restrictions under the Public Health Emergency Order. These amendments primarily impacted the delivery of training as they moved from an in-person format to an online platform, which is now embedded as a system feature for hybrid training options.
- ✓ The enhanced Child Protection Worker Statutory Core training is now integrated into the CFS Training and Supported Development Framework.
- ✓ As part of the training framework, CFS created a streamlined approach to re-appoint Child Protection Workers returning to the system following a leave of absence. This continues to alleviate delays related to the Appointment process and assist with retention of qualified staff.
- ✓ Child and Family Services delivered a series of mandatory refresher training on 12 training topics for all staff based on key internal audit findings.
- ✓ An enhanced Adoption Worker training was developed and implemented. In 2021, 13 new Adoption Workers across the NWT received an appointment under the *Adoption Act*.
- ✓ An online learning platform accessible to all CFS staff was established to ensure all CFS training resources are accessible to all staff and virtual training opportunities are accessible to staff.



Culture of Quality

The continuous assessment of where system improvements can be made is a key part of the QIP. This process not only encourages ongoing accountability and oversight of practice, policies, and initiatives, but also ensures comprehensive supports are delivered through the most suitable mechanisms and reaching the appropriate individuals and families.

- ✓ In response to the implementation of the the federal government's *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, two new overarching CFS practice standards were developed. These standards were specific to CFS's commitment to working with Indigenous families and providing notice of a significant measure. In addition to these Standards, seven existing practice standards were updated to more closely align with the Federal *Act* and were implemented alongside the two new Standards.
- ✓ Child and Family Services expanded prevention supports to include expectant parents. Expectant parents can now receive support throughout the prenatal period, allowing for continuous support that can extend to supporting the family after the birth of the child.
- ✓ The Family Preservation Program was developed and implemented. This program provides families with supports, including wrap-around supports, to promote family unity and wellbeing. Funding was allocated to each region for a family preservation worker and staff recruitment and training was completed using a community integration model approach.
- ✓ Child and Family Services supported the Standing Committee on Social Development's review of the *Child and Family Services Act*.
- ✓ Child and Family Services completed and received system-wide Accreditation through Accreditation Canada.
- ✓ Child and Family Services continues to update practice standards and procedures to ensure they align with the principles of the federal government's *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* and with current best practice.



Engagement

To fully understand the needs of the CFS System, continuous feedback from key stakeholders, service users and Indigenous communities is essential. This feedback requires the proper mechanisms to gather information used to inform the development of future system improvement initiatives.

- ✓ Child and Family Services leadership met with five Indigenous governments to provide information on the GNWT's implementation of the federal government's *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, share information (i.e., data) on children/youth receiving services in the community/region, and/or identify ways to strengthen partnerships in the best interests of children.
 - ✓ The Department committed to the ongoing sharing of data and information with Indigenous governments on a regular basis and as requested.
 - ✓ Staff engagement activities, including regular all-staff meetings, implementation of an anonymous staff feedback mechanism, and conducting recurring staff satisfaction surveys, were successfully implemented.
- ✓ A Foster Caregiver Survey implemented by the Foster Family Coalition of the NWT to understand the impact of the respite program that was developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was completed. Results indicated:
 - ▶ The respite program reduced stress for families;
 - ▶ Children/youth formed positive relationships with workers;
 - ▶ Staff were trusted, knowledgeable, and became part of the child, youth, and caregiver's support network; and
 - ▶ Caregivers valued the support they received and believed this contributed to their ability to continue to welcome children/youth into their homes.

Review and Re-Assessment of Initiatives

A focus on continuous quality improvement is necessary for any service system to evolve and respond to the changing needs of its communities. From the onset of the QIP, this plan was intended to be flexible and adaptable to the evolving and diverse needs of children, youth, and families. The QIP has successfully guided the implementation of key system structures that will carry into the next phase of system reform. In some instances, initiatives that were anticipated to be carried out throughout the QIP were re-assessed due to changes in system priorities, introduction of new legislation, and the COVID-19 pandemic. As of December 2021, of the 70 action items of the QIP, two action items were delayed, and one action item was paused until further notice.

Child and Family Services anticipated the release of the federal government's *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families* in January 2020 and identified the need to re-assess QIP initiatives to better align with this Legislation. New initiatives were developed to strengthen the CFS system to ensure the foundational work to shift towards a more engaged, less intrusive, and family-centered approach to service delivery was completed or underway.

Upon the release of the federal *Act*, by January 2020 existing CFS practice was found to align with many of the national principles. A review of current practice and policies was completed and areas where work was required to fully implement the federal *Act* were identified. The commitment to update these key areas in response to the federal *Act* meant a required

deviation from the established schedule for standard development, resulting in the delay of updates to two sections of the CFS practice standard manual. Child and Family Services will carry this work forward into the subsequent plan for system reform.

In an ongoing effort to incorporate culturally safe and anti-racism principles in CFS practice and policy, CFS is committed to a critical assessment of current practice approaches, including the use of assessments and tools. One example of this is the use of the Structured Decision-Making® (SDM) Model. The SDM® model is an evidence-based approach used to assess the safety and well-being of children by focusing on the strengths and needs of their families.

One initiative within the QIP included the implementation of the two remaining tools of the SDM® model that aided decision-making in risk assessments and family reunification assessments. This was identified as an area of system improvement for the QIP as it supported the strengthening of a family-centered, strengths-based approach when assessing child safety and well-being in child protection matters.

In April 2021, CFS made the decision to pause work on this action item. This decision aligns with the approach to reforming CFS practice as each tool will be re-assessed to determine their relevancy and effectiveness when used to support and provide services to Indigenous individuals and families.

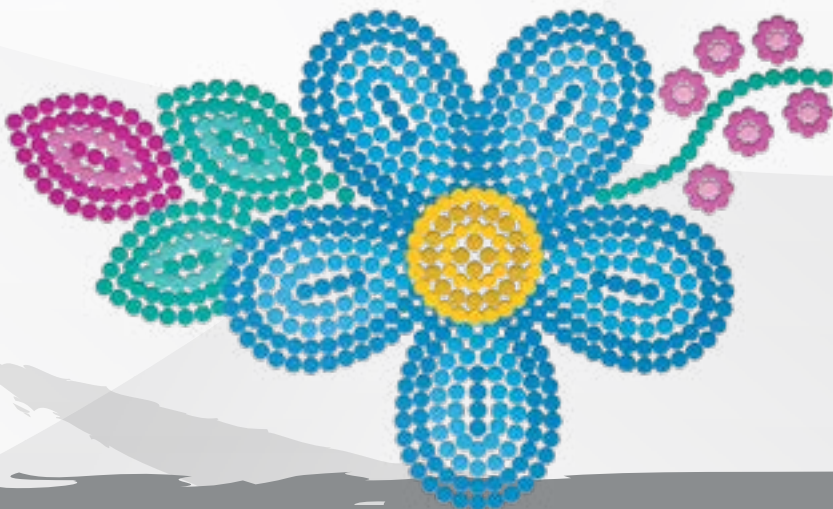
COVID-19 Pandemic and the Quality Improvement Plan

In March 2020, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many initiatives of the QIP were underway. Upon the issuance of the Public Health Emergency Order in the NWT, CFS quickly pivoted system resources to respond to the needs of families. Work completed during the first year of the QIP was essential to the success of the CFS system's rapid response to ensuring the safety of children, youth, families, caregivers, and staff while maintaining Legislative responsibilities under the *Child and Family Services Act* during the Public Health Emergency Order.

Throughout the last two years of the QIP, COVID-19 had a significant impact on service delivery, staff recruitment and retention, and system priorities. Together, limited capacity and resources demanded a creative and flexible approach to ensuring the safety of families and staff, while still meeting the best interests of children and youth.

Despite challenges, CFS adapted service delivery to meet the new and unique needs of families during the pandemic. These services will continue to be offered until the end of the Public Health Emergency Order and include:

- **Respite program for placement caregivers:**
 - ▶ This program was developed to support placement resources during the pandemic, specifically during times of increased isolation. This program was offered in partnership with the Foster Family Coalition of the NWT.
- **Brief Service Agreements:**
 - ▶ Short-term financial support was a need families identified early in the pandemic. In response to this need, Brief Service Agreements were created to provide families with a one-time assistance to purchase necessities such as diapers, food, and fuel to meet their basic needs when other programs did not provide adequate support.
- **Extended Support Services to youth and young adults:**
 - ▶ A Ministerial Directive was issued to extend support services for youth and young adults who would normally age out of receiving services during the pandemic. These support services will continue to be extended until 90 days after the expiry of the Public Health Emergency Order to allow time for adequate transition planning.



Next Steps Towards System Reform

While much progress has been made under the guidance of the QIP, there continue to be many systemic issues, such as poverty, housing insecurity, and financial insecurity, that contribute to inequities of services delivered to families and the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care. Child and Family Services is committed to the ongoing improvement of service delivery throughout the NWT to address these inequities and long-standing overrepresentation.

Over the course of the next year, CFS will be completing an analysis of the implementation of key initiatives of the QIP. This analysis will include an in-depth review of data collected through quality assurance processes over the past three years, as well as data gathered for the Annual Report of the Director of Child and Family Services, and feedback from Indigenous communities, staff and stakeholders.

In April 2022, the 2019-2021 QIP will evolve into a one-year action plan titled the “2022-2023 Child and Family Services Action Plan” (see Appendix A). This action plan will function as a one-year “bridge-plan” which will guide the system while the in-depth analysis of the QIP is completed. This bridge-plan will also allow time for the CFS system to re-focus priorities post-Public Health Emergency Order and strategically build a plan to move forward towards the goal of system reform.



The development of this action plan was led by the Department, in collaboration with the three Authorities, and in consultation with several of the Department’s Divisions. As part of CFS’s commitment to shifting practice and policies through the guidance of culturally safe and anti-racism principles, the Department’s Community, Culture and Innovation Division has been an active collaborator in the development of the plan and is the lead on several individual action items.

This action plan has four objectives which are guided by the same four strategic directions as the QIP. The 12 action items within the plan expands on work completed from the QIP, adheres to recommendations from the 2018 Auditor General’s Report, and incorporates feedback previously received from both staff and Indigenous governments.

The four objectives include:

1. Continue to build a culture of quality and cultural safety within CFS
2. Expand engagement initiatives with Indigenous governments on CFS service delivery in communities
3. Develop a communication plan for CFS
4. Strengthen Human Resources recruitment and retention efforts for a skilled and representative CFS workforce

Why a “Bridge Plan”?

To maintain the momentum of system improvement, the CFS system required a framework which would continue to guide priorities while the impact of the QIP was analyzed and a plan for future system reform was developed. A plan to bridge system improvement plans also supported CFS in remaining transparent and accountable in ongoing work.

Much of the work outlined in the *2022-2023 Child and Family Services Action Plan* is currently underway. This work is anticipated to set the foundation for many of the initiatives that will be implemented during the course of the system reform plan beginning in 2023.

The plan for system reform and commitment to address inequities spans across many areas of CFS, including the strengthening of prevention and family preservation services, a focused effort on maintaining family, community, and cultural connections at the onset and throughout the case planning process, and ensuring CFS standards of practice and policies are updated to reflect culturally safe and anti-racism practices.

Moving forward, system improvement initiatives will reflect a plan for larger system reform which will be influenced by:

- ▶ The *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action;
- ▶ *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Calls for Justice*;
- ▶ The 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the 19th Legislative Assembly’s priority to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and
- ▶ The federal government’s *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*.

It is well known that children and youth achieve better outcomes when they are raised in their family homes and are supported to maintain cultural continuity and their sense of identity and belonging. Building off the QIP, the 2022-2023 CFS Action Plan and system reform plan will improve areas of service delivery that promote the principles of cultural safety and anti-racism, family preservation and unity, and community, cultural, and family continuity.

In the long-term, quality improvement initiatives are anticipated to contribute to outcomes that will positively impact children and families receiving services, as well as their communities. Examples of these outcomes include but are not limited to addressing the disproportional representation of Indigenous children and youth receiving CFS services, promoting an increased capacity for families and communities to care for their children, and the provision of culturally safe services that families report meet their needs.

Appendix A

2022-2023 Child and Family Services Action Plan

Objective #1: Continue to build a culture of quality and cultural safety within Child and Family Services (CFS)

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, we will continue to focus on building a culture of quality and cultural safety within the CFS system. To ensure a coordinated cultural safety approach, CFS will work closely with the Department's Community, Culture and Innovation Division who is responsible for driving cultural safety efforts across the Health and Social Services system. This includes the development of engagement strategies with Indigenous staff and communities, plans for embedding cultural safety and anti-racism principles within policies and practice, and offering learning opportunities for CFS staff to build their understanding of cultural safety.

Anticipated outcomes that will be impacted by this work in the short and medium term include an increased capacity to offer CFS services through a culturally safe approach. Areas within the CFS



system which are identified as an area of risk or in need of significant improvement will also be prioritized and a strategic approach to addressing these will be developed. In the longer term, along with future system improvement initiatives, these actions will contribute to a sustainable workforce and the delivery of culturally safe and equitable services for children, youth and families.

Actions	Lead	Deadline	Deliverable	Progress measured by:
1.1 Develop a 3-year Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2023-2026	DHSS/ NTHSSA/ TCSA/ HRHSSA	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFS will have a strategic plan to guide system reform initiatives from 2023-2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This plan will include outstanding items from the QIP • Report progress on the Standing Committee on Social Development (SCOSD)'s recommendations that were accepted by the GNWT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan to guide system reform initiatives over a 3-year period is ready for implementation on April 1, 2023
1.2 Ensure monitoring and quality assurance processes implemented during the 2019-2021 QIP are embedded in the CFS system	DHSS/NTHSSA	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued adherence to polices, processes and services established from the QIP • Review the quality assurance mechanisms established during the QIP and the process of utilizing data obtained through these mechanisms to inform future system improvement initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ongoing implementation of system quality assurance processes via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ the ongoing implementation of processes for Human Resources ▶ the ongoing implementation of Family Preservation framework ▶ Quality Reviews ▶ System-Wide Audits ▶ Annual release of Director of CFS's Report
1.3 Expand on current quality assurance processes by establishing an approach to synthesizing information and data gathered for the purpose of identifying areas of risk, strength, and further improvement	DHSS/NTHSSA	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An approach to synthesizing information and data gathered through existing quality assurance processes will be developed. This approach will also include a pathway for the dissemination of findings from quality assurance processes to DHSS and the Authorities/TCSA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This deliverable builds off work completed in action item 1.2* • Review the Accountability framework established in the QIP to ensure it reflects current reporting structures • Reconcile results from quarterly reviews and system wide audits to assess progress made during the 3-year period of the QIP and identify outstanding areas of risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy will be developed which guides how areas of risk within the CFS system are identified through the analysis of information from existing CFS quality assurance processes • The Accountability Framework will be reviewed and updated as required • Results from quality reviews and system-wide audits between 2019 and 2021 will be assessed and compared to the reported progress of the 2019-2021 QIP

Actions	Lead	Deadline	Deliverable	Progress measured by:
<p>1.4 Engage in activities which ensure the alignment of CFS practice with new and updated legislations that directly impact CFS service provision</p>	<p>DHSS/NTHSSA/PLC</p>	<p>March 31, 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to the SCOSD's Report on the <i>Child and Family Services Act</i> Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together and the 18 recommendations • Participate in Coordination Agreement discussions when Indigenous Governing Bodies have made a request to enter into a coordination agreement, as part of their inherent right of self-government, including jurisdiction in relation to CFS • Coordinate and collaborate with GNWT Departments to establish a GNWT Implementation Advisory Group approach in the alignment of CFS services with emerging Indigenous CFS legislation(s) • Continue to reprofile standards of practice to reflect emerging legislation (ie. <i>Child and Family Services Act, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families, Inuvialuit Qitunrariit Inuuniarnikkun Maligaksat</i> ("Family Way of Living Law"), <i>Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act, Adoption Act</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A response to the SCOSD on the 18 recommendations will be made within 120 days of the release of the report • CFS will be an active participant in established Coordination Agreement Discussions • GNWT Implementation Advisory Group is established • CFS practice standards will continue to be reprofiled

Actions	Lead	Deadline	Deliverable	Progress measured by:
<p>1.5 Continue to build staff capacity through training and mentorship to create a professional, skilled, culturally safe workforce and organizational culture</p>	<p>DHSS/NTHSSA</p>	<p>March 31, 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued implementation of training for supervisors/managers • New and future training offered will be prioritized according to key areas identified through quality assurance processes (ie. system wide audits, quality reviews, etc.) • Offer training and mentorship for Indigenous staff to build local capacity in communities according to the GNWT Human Resources strategic plan and CCI Community Practice for Indigenous staff • Ongoing availability of self-directed learning/training resources on the CFS electronic learning platform • Implementation of survey to capture personal experiences and outcomes of individuals and families receiving CFS services • Dedicate one Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training offered by Community, Culture and Innovation (CCI) Division for CFS staff • Collaborate with the GNWT CCI Division on the inclusion of culturally safe and anti-racism principles in training curriculums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and types of training offered to supervisor/managers • Training schedule is developed based on information obtained from quality assurance processes • Number and types of training/mentorship opportunities offered to Indigenous staff • Self-directed learning and training resources are available on the CFS electronic learning platform • Acceptable grades on training knowledge checks for staff • CFS receives feedback from children/youth/families engaging with CFS services • One Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training session delivered to 30 CFS staff • The CCI Division will identify and prioritize curricula to be reviewed and initiate the review process

Actions	Lead	Deadline	Deliverable	Progress measured by:
1.6 Develop a plan and identify pathways to embed cultural safety and anti-racism principles in CFS practice	DHSS/NTHSSA/CCI	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CCI Division will develop HSS system-wide principles for cultural safety and anti-racism and will work with CFS to embed into system wide practice and development of new initiatives • A strategic approach to embed cultural safety and anti-racism principles within CFS practices will be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan is developed by March 2023 and ready for implementation in April 2023
1.7 Develop a plan for the coordination and organization of hard-copy and electronic CFS files	DHSS/NTHSSA	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan for the coordination and organization of hard-copy and electronic CFS files will be developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This plan should include a pathway to create a single electronic record for clients, a management system for historical records (including paper records), and an integrated approach to managing both types of record systems within 1 file 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed plan will be approved by March 31, 2023

Objective #2: Expand engagement initiatives with Indigenous governments on Child and Family Services in communities

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, priority will be given to expanding engagement initiatives with Indigenous governments and communities on CFS delivery in the NWT. As part of the ongoing implementation of principles in the federal government's *Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families*, CFS will continue to work in collaboration with Indigenous governments in the guidance of CFS services. Focusing on engagement initiatives with Indigenous governments will strengthen relationships with communities and improve the provision of culturally informed services. The anticipated long-term outcome of engagement is the delivery of Indigenous-informed and led services to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families.

Actions	Lead	Deadline	Deliverable	How will it be measured?
2.1 Continue to offer opportunities for bilateral meetings and engagement with Indigenous governments to discuss the GNWT's implementation of the Federal Act, data/information sharing, and overall CFS service delivery in communities	DHSS	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFS will continue to engage and offer opportunities for engagement with Indigenous governments Continue sharing of information and data with Indigenous governments Methods of engagement will be tailored to the needs and requests of Indigenous governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of Indigenous governments engaged with CFS on matters involving CFS service delivery to their members Quarterly and annual reports continue to be provided to Indigenous governments as per bilateral commitments Methods of engagement will be informed by feedback received from Indigenous governments
2.2 Standardize an approach for Indigenous governments and their representatives to provide feedback related to CFS service delivery	DHSS/NTHSSA	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A standardized approach that includes (but is not limited to) existing forums and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed approach will be approved by March 2023
2.3 Support Indigenous governments in governing CFS service delivery to their members	DHSS	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active participation along side Indigenous governments in collaboration tables, coordination agreement tables, and/or ongoing discussions about CFS service delivery in communities Pathways to invite Indigenous governments into existing service delivery processes will be identified (ie. Processes related to recruitment of staff, training, areas of prevention or protection service delivery, amongst others) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathways to invite Indigenous governments into service delivery processes will be identified

Objective #3: Develop a communication plan for Child and Family Services

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, targeted actions will focus on developing a communication plan for CFS. The purpose of developing a CFS communication plan is to increase awareness of the types of supports and services offered, as well as initiatives related to ongoing system improvement. An effective communication plan will also serve to increase accessibility of services to individuals seeking support and, over time, reduce the stigma associated with CFS by highlighting system reform initiatives and changes in practice.

Actions	Lead	Deadline	Deliverable	How will it be measured?
3.1 Create an integrated communication plan across DHSS and the 3 Authorities for the dissemination of information related to CFS service delivery to the public, Indigenous governments, stakeholders, service users, and staff	DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHSS, NTHSSA, HRHSSA, and TCSA co-develop a communication plan that meets the needs of the CFS system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A communication plan for DHSS and the 3 Authorities will be proposed by March 2023

Objective #4: Strengthen Human Resources recruitment and retention efforts for a skilled and representative Child and Family Services workforce

Over the next fiscal year, CFS is committed to strengthening human resource recruitment and retention efforts to continue to build a skilled and representative workforce. This work will involve the review of existing strategies and effective practice, with a focus on building local capacity in alignment with the GNWT Human Resources strategic plan. In the short-term, it is anticipated that the successful completion of this objective will lead to a decrease in staff turnover through the reduction of barriers which, in turn, will impact recruitment and retention of a representative workforce.

Actions	Lead	Deadline	Deliverable	How will it be measured?
4.1 Review current staff recruitment and retention strategies and develop a plan to strengthen these approaches with the goal of a stable and representative CFS workforce	NTHSSA/DHSS	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review recruitment and retention processes developed during QIP 1.0 to determine effectiveness in achieving recruitment and retention goals and identify areas for further improvement. Consideration of effective strategies to be used in an “endemic” context will be included ▶ This review will include the identification of strategies to create a workforce reflective of the Indigenous population it serves and provide recommendations to improve strategies which also align with the GNWT Human Resources strategic plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of current recruitment and retention strategies within CFS and Health and Social Services as well as strategies to continue to build a more representative workforce will be completed, along with proposed recommendations for action



