

# Yukon Family and Children's Services



2015/16  
**Annual Report**





# Message from the Director

The 2015/16 fiscal year marks a number of important accomplishments in service delivery for child welfare services as mandated under the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA). We entered into more extended family care agreements than in the previous year and increased the monthly financial support provided to extended family members to support them. These agreements are an important mechanism that ensures children who require out-of-home care remain with their extended family, within communities, and connected to their culture instead of entering into the Director's care.

The Branch engaged in more cooperative planning processes, including family group conferences, with children/youth, parents, extended family members, and First Nation partners than in the past. The number of family group conferences held in 2015/16 increased almost two-fold from the previous year.

In 2014/2015, we made a commitment to support youth in care as they transition to adulthood and in 2015/16 we re-developed policies to better support youth through transition and support service agreements.

Our partnerships with First Nations are critical and we continue to build on these. Our close working relationships and collaborative efforts to provide supports to First Nation members have improved a number of outcomes, including a substantial increase in finding placements for First Nation children (who require out-of-home care) within their own community. In 2015/16, we entered into contribution agreements with seven First Nations to fund Family Support Worker positions that undertake child welfare liaison work with our branch.

Despite these highlights, there are some challenges we need to address. Across Canada, there is a foster caregiver crisis with fewer and fewer people available to provide temporary placements for children; Yukon is no exception

to this problem. But we are working collaboratively with foster caregivers and community partners to develop sustainable solutions. In addition to the fall 2015 marketing strategy to recruit foster caregivers, the Minister held a Foster Care Forum in May 2015 to engage in an open dialogue with foster caregivers.

Staffing challenges were another obstacle in our path. But our five-year Social Services Division Human Resources Strategic Plan is promising. It will undoubtedly have a positive impact on our staff and improve our service delivery.

Since 2010, the CFSA has provided us with both the legal authority for child protection in Yukon and the legislative framework for us to deliver services to children, youth, and families. Considering that we have operated under the CFSA for over half a decade, it is time to examine whether the purposes and principles of the legislation are being achieved. As mandated under the CFSA, the legislation must be reviewed every five years and we have initiated work to undertake this review.

Looking back to 2015/16, it is clear that without the dedication of our staff as well as our First Nations and community partners, we would not have been able to achieve all that was achieved. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their commitment to support children, youth, and families across Yukon. Every day they continue to make a significant difference in the lives of those we serve. I applaud them for all of their efforts and I look forward to working with them all in the coming year.

Brad Bell  
Director, Family and Children's Services  
Department of Health and Social Services





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## Executive Summary

The 2015/16 CFSA Annual Report highlights the broad range of child welfare services provided by Health and Social Services over the last year to support children and families throughout the territory. This year's report reflects upon the department's previous commitment to improve performance measurement in an effort to continually improve service delivery. As such, the report includes quantitative analysis for a number of indicators which are reflective of the key mandates of the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA), such as collaboration with families and First Nations, providing culturally-appropriate services, and supporting youth as they transition to adulthood.

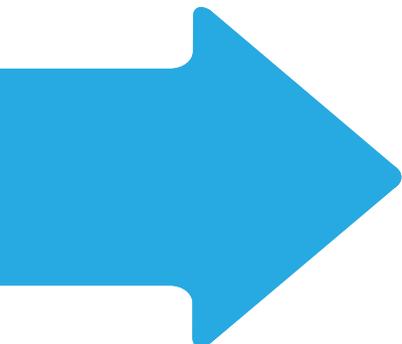
In 2015/16, the number of families with identified child protection concerns decreased to 568 families, compared to the previous two years (653 families in 2013/14 and 682 families in 2014/15). There were 101 families receiving preventative support services in 2015/16.

The results from the 2015/16 internal compliance audit highlight many areas of strength, as well as opportunities for improvement. For example, the number of extended family care agreements increased significantly in 2015/16 to 101 agreements, almost twice the number of agreements signed the previous year. Other positive trends observed in 2015/16 include the rate at which cooperative planning was offered and accessed by families, as well as the percentage of First Nation children in care or custody of the Director who are living in their cultural community (50%). The internal compliance audit also identified areas for improvement such as increasing the rate at which First Nations are notified once protective intervention is initiated, as well as increasing the frequency of social worker contact with children in care.

In 2015/16, the department:

- continued to work collaboratively with First Nations and families through cooperative planning, including the Family Conferencing Program;
- operated a cultural camp in partnership with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations for children in group home care at the Long Ago People's Place;
- expanded the Healthy Families Program to offer preventative support services in Watson Lake for families with young children;
- implemented foster care program improvement initiatives including development of the Foster Care Services Action Plan, launching of a marketing campaign designed to attract new foster parents, and facilitation of a Foster Care Forum;
- advanced the Continuing Improvement Case Management System project to plan development of a new child welfare case management system; and
- began preparation to undertake a five year review of the CFSA.

The department has a number of initiatives planned to enhance programs to improve service delivery to children, families and our community partners.





## Strategic Context

### Legislative

Child welfare services in Yukon are provided by the Department of Health and Social Services (the department) under the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA). Since proclamation in 2010, the CFSA has resulted in many positive outcomes including a reduction in numbers of children in care, additional up-front support services, and more involvement of First Nations and families in the planning and decision making process. The CFSA emphasises quality of service and demonstration of accountability through continued program evaluation.

Under the CFSA, the Director of Family and Children's Services reports annually to the Minister on the provision of services during the previous year. The annual report also provides an opportunity to report on compliance with key child welfare service standards. The 2015/16 reporting year marks the sixth year of compliance monitoring under the CFSA. In keeping with the intent of the CFSA to report on compliance with the service standards every three years, the 2015/16 annual report reflects back on compliance since 2013/14.

### Demographics and Geography

According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Yukon had an estimated population of 37,343 in June 2015, with First Nations comprising approximately 20% of the population. Youth under 20 years of age represented approximately 21% of the entire Yukon population, while youth under age 20 represented a larger portion of the First Nations population at 30%.

The majority of the Yukon population (77%) lived in the Whitehorse area in 2015/16, with the remainder of the population living in communities throughout the territory. The First Nations population is much more evenly dispersed in comparison, with 54% living in Whitehorse and 46% living in communities.

### Service Delivery

The department employs two different types of service delivery models in Whitehorse and other communities throughout the territory. In Whitehorse, social workers deliver specialised child welfare services in the areas of child protection, family support, child-in-care services, and foster home supports. A more generalist approach is implemented in rural areas, with social workers providing a broad range of services including those governed by the CFSA.

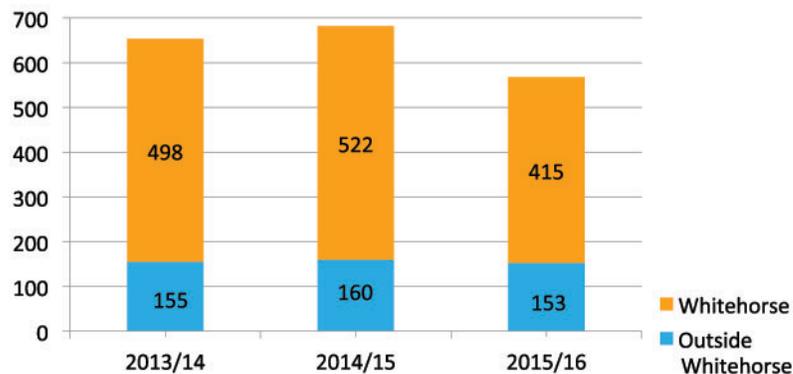
# Supporting Parents and Families to Care for their Children

The CFSA allows for support services for children and their families to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of children throughout Yukon. These support services are designed to increase parenting capacity, build family resiliency, and allow a child to remain safely in the home or with extended family whenever possible. Support services are offered through various types of agreements under the CFSA and are tailored to meet the individual needs and goals of each family.

## Families receiving support services

The department may become aware of children protection concerns in a number of ways, including mandatory reporting as required under the CFSA. Whenever child protection concerns are identified, social workers offer services to the child and/or family to reduce risk to child safety. Support services may include in-home support, counselling, parenting programs, child and youth programs, and respite. In 2015/16, there were 568 families with identified child protection concerns.

**Chart 1: Number of families with identified child protection concerns**

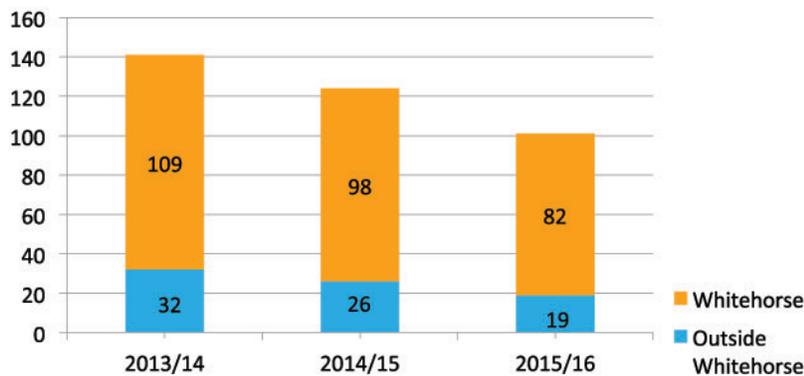


*In 2015/16, the number of families in Yukon with identified child protection concerns decreased from the previous two years to 568 families.*

2015/16 Service Provision

Where there is no immediate danger to the child, the department offers support services to families to prevent child protection concerns from arising or reoccurring. Preventative support services include counselling, parenting programs, respite, independent living skills training, and coordination of other services offered by the department including addiction treatment service. In 2015/16, there were 101 families that accepted preventative support services (Chart 2).

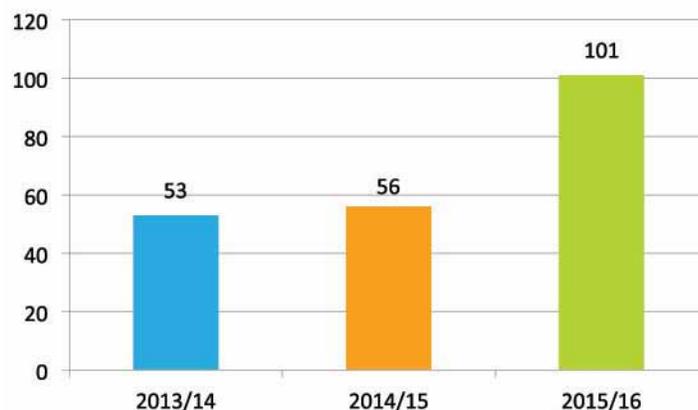
**Chart 2: Number of families receiving preventative support services**



### Extended Family Care

The first choice for a child in need of out-of-home care is to have the child reside with extended family. Extended family care agreements allow children to remain with extended family members, rather than coming into the care or custody of the Director. Under an extended family care agreement, financial and other support services may be on a short-term basis or provided up until the child reaches 19 years of age. In 2015/16, the number of extended family care agreements increased significantly to 101, almost twice the number of agreements signed the previous two years.

**Chart 3: Number of Extended Family Care Agreements**



*The number of extended family care agreements in 2015/16 increased almost two-fold compared to the previous two years, allowing more children to reside with extended family rather than coming into the care or custody of the Director.*

## Collaborative and Inclusive Decision-Making

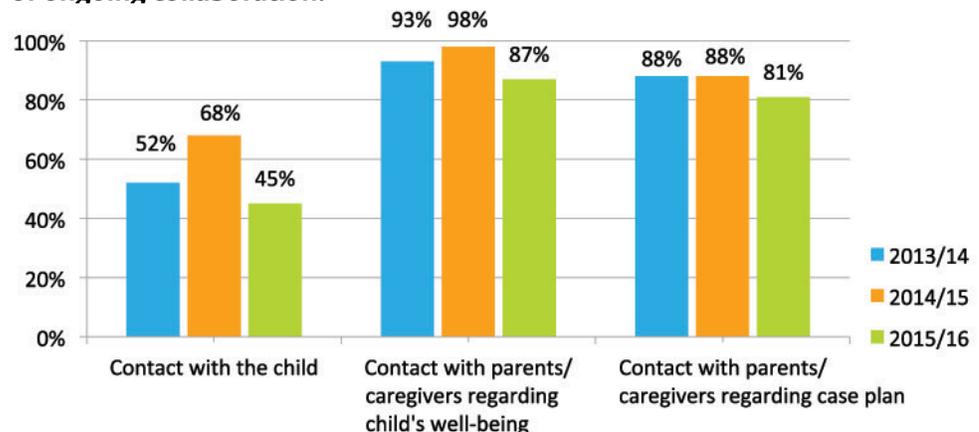
The CFSA recognizes the importance of inclusiveness and collaboration with families, First Nations, and communities throughout the planning and delivery of programs and services. One example of how these principles are ingrained in case planning is through the cooperative planning process. Cooperative planning brings together families, extended family members, First Nations representatives (where applicable), and community supports to develop a case plan that serves the best needs of the child, taking into account the wishes of the family and the child's culture and heritage. One form of cooperative planning is family conferencing; however, cooperative planning can take many forms. Traditionally, many cultures had collaborative practices that they used for decision making for their children and families.

### Ongoing contact with children and families

Ongoing contact between social workers and caregivers provides an opportunity for families to continue to be involved in planning for the child throughout the continuum of care. Caregivers and parents are able to provide valuable insight in relation to the child's needs which helps inform case planning decisions. Ongoing contact also builds trust between the social worker, child and family and provides a forum for caregivers to ask questions and receive support.

An internal compliance audit conducted on a random sample of case files in 2015/16 found that social workers met with the child at least once per month in 45% of cases (Chart 4). A decrease in compliance from the previous year may have been influenced by youth refusing to meet with social workers, lack of staff resources, and/or insufficient documentation of contact in relevant case files (such as lack of documenting contact with a child during a home visit). Although contact by social workers with the child decreased in 2015/16, contact with parents/caregivers in regard to the child's wellbeing and case plan remained relatively high at 87% and 81%, respectively.

**Chart 4: Social worker contact with children and parents/caregivers as part of ongoing collaboration.**



2015/16 Service Provision

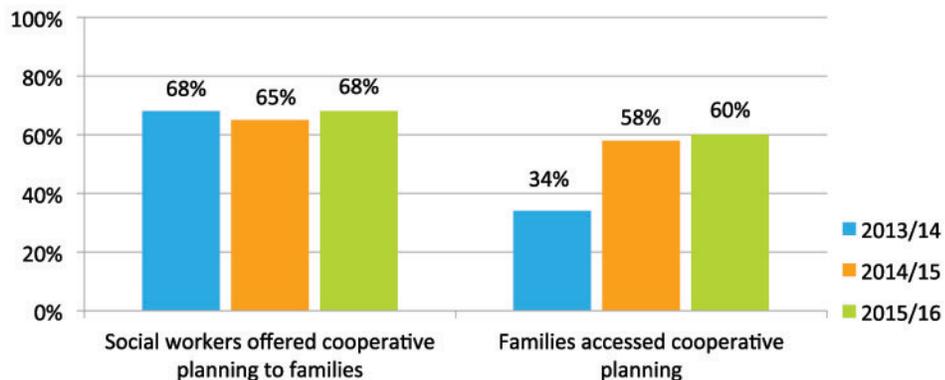
The department recognizes that there is work to be done to improve compliance in relation to social worker contact with children. In response, the department will expand communication and training for front-line staff to further assess obstacles that may prevent contact with children and to ensure all staff are properly trained on procedures related to this service provision, including proper documentation. In addition, the department's social services division has recently implemented a five-year Human Resource Strategic Plan to recruit and retain staff in an effort to alleviate staff shortages which may be preventing more frequent contact with children.

### Cooperative Planning

When children are in need of protective intervention, cooperative planning allows families to become involved in the decision-making process related to the care and well-being of their children. Two forms of cooperative planning include family conferencing and case conferences.

An internal compliance audit conducted on a random sample of case files in 2015/16 demonstrated that social workers offered cooperative planning to families in 68% of cases, similar to the previous two years (Chart 5). The compliance results indicate that families accepted cooperative planning in 60% of the cases, suggesting that the majority of families that are offered cooperative planning accessed this service. The number of families accessing cooperative planning has progressively increased over the last three years, rising by 26 percent points since 2013/14.

**Chart 5: Social worker offers of cooperative planning and families accessing cooperative planning**



*The family conferencing program was highly successful in 2015/16 with 100% approval of all plans developed through the program.*

While the rate at which families accessed cooperative planning has increased over the last three years, there is room for improvement to increase the rate at which cooperative planning is offered to clients. In 2016/17, the department will assess potential barriers which may prevent social workers from offering this service. Based on the outcome of this assessment, improvement initiatives will be developed and implemented in an effort to increase the rate of cooperative planning. For example, if staff awareness is identified as a potential barrier, the department will look for opportunities to increase staff training in addition to the core training currently offered for this service provision.

### **Family Conferencing**

Family Conferencing is one form of cooperative planning offered by the department. Facilitated by a neutral coordinator, a family conference brings together family members, First Nation representatives (if applicable), community supports and the social worker to discuss planning for the child, including out-of-home care options.

Having family members involved in the decision-making process recognizes that families have unique strengths and insights to plan for their child's care and safety. In addition to promoting family members to become involved in planning for their children, family conferencing also provides a supportive atmosphere for family members to build and heal relationships with one another and connect with community supports.

Although the results of the internal compliance audit suggest that the rate at which cooperative planning is offered and accessed could be improved (Chart 5), the number of family conferences held in 2015/16 increased almost two-fold in comparison to the previous year. A total of 21 family conferences were held in 2015/16, serving 16 different families, including 15 First Nation families.

One measure of the success of the family conference process is the family develops its own plan and social workers agree to the plan. In 2015/16, all plans (100%) developed through family conferencing were approved by the social worker.





## Collaboration with First Nations

The CFSA includes provisions to ensure First Nations have the opportunity to participate in the planning and delivery of services to children and families throughout the territory. In 2015/16, the department and Yukon First Nations continued to collaborate on child protection issues to provide culturally appropriate services to children and families requiring assistance.

- A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed in October 2012 between the department and Kwanlin Dün First Nation provides a framework for working together on child welfare matters. Further work is planned in 2016/17 to move towards development of MOAs with other First Nations throughout the territory.
- The department staffs an on-site child welfare social worker position to support Kwanlin Dün First Nation children and their families.
- The department funds family support positions with seven First Nations including Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Ta'an Kwach'an Council, Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Selkirk First Nation and Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation. Family support workers help ensure services are culturally appropriate, accompany social workers in responding to child protection concerns, and participate in planning and decision making.
- Regular meetings are held between the department and specific First Nations to address child welfare concerns as they arise and to continue to collaborate on key provisions of the CFSA that affect First Nations and their children.
- First Nation representatives are invited to participate in cooperative planning for their members, including family conferences (see page 9 of this report).

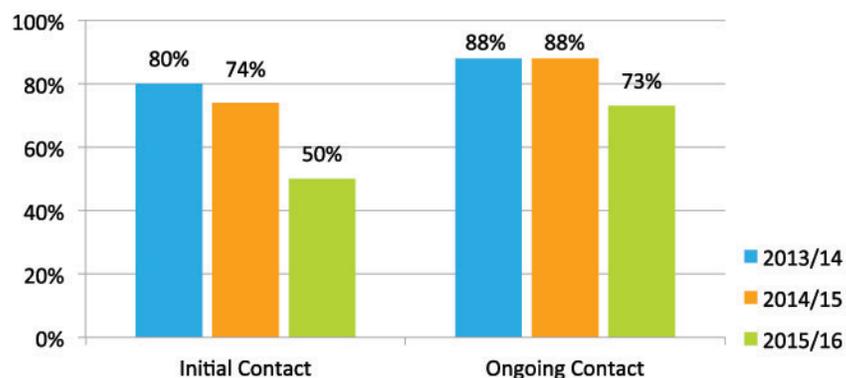
### Early and ongoing involvement of First Nations

To ensure First Nations have early and ongoing involvement in the delivery of child welfare services, social workers are required to notify a child’s First Nation when protective intervention is first initiated and throughout the various stages of provision of care. This inclusive approach ensures children and families involved in the child welfare system receive services which are culturally appropriate and promote connections to the child’s community.

In 2015/16, internal compliance audits on a random sample of case files indicate that the child’s First Nation was notified immediately or as soon as practicable in 50% of cases, a decrease of 24 percentage points from the previous year (Chart 6). The rate associated with ongoing notification of First Nations (73%) was higher in comparison to the rate of initial contact, but decreased in comparison to the compliance rate of 88% observed in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The decline in First Nation notification rates may be due in part to social workers contacting First Nations through alternate processes, such as informal discussions. These informal processes may result in a lack of proper documentation in case files, leading to lower compliance rates. In addition, the relatively small sample size (12) does introduce some uncertainty regarding the representativeness of the audit results for this measure. Notwithstanding these issues, the decline in compliance results observed in 2015/16 for this service standard indicates that there is an opportunity to improve First Nation notification

**Chart 6: Initial and ongoing notification of a child’s First Nation**



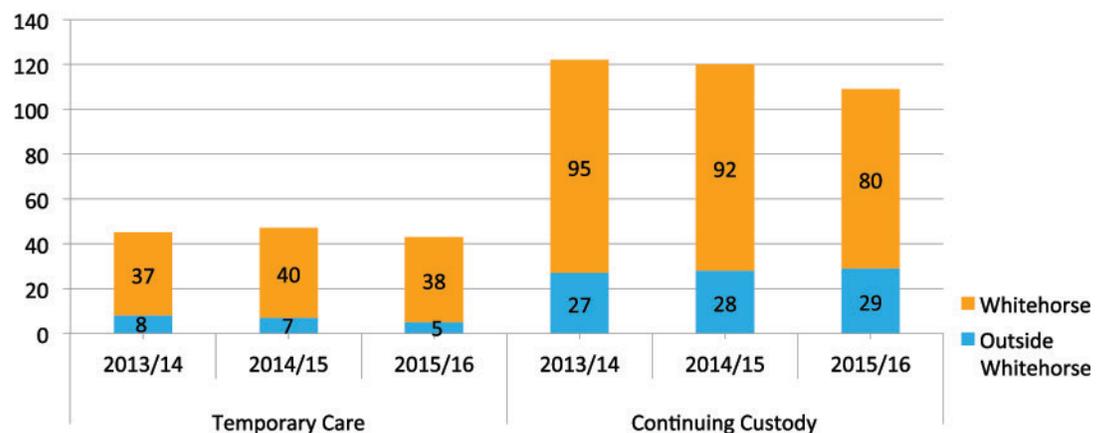
The department recognizes that there is a need to improve contact with First Nations through consistent, timely communication reflected through proper documentation. In response, the department will offer operational-level training to all social workers to improve compliance with this service provision, in addition to core training programs currently offered.

## Children in Out-of-Home Care

### Children in the Care or Custody of the Director

A child enters the temporary care of the Director when safety concerns prevent a child from remaining in their home, and extended family is not available. While the child is in temporary care, support services are provided to the family in an effort to address child protection concerns so that the child can return home as quickly as possible. If child protection concerns are not resolved, children may enter the continuing custody of the Director. The number of children in the temporary care and continuing custody of the Director decreased in 2015/16 to 43 and 109 children, respectively (Chart 7). This decrease may be attributed to the corresponding increase in the number of extended family care agreements (page 7 of this report), which allows more children to reside with extended family rather than coming into the care or custody of the director.

**Chart 7: Number of Yukon children in the care or custody of the Director**



*Foster parents play a vital role in the child welfare system in Yukon, providing a caring, loving, stable home environment for children. In fall 2015, the department launched a “Fostering is inclusive” campaign to attract new foster parents throughout Yukon. The campaign raised awareness through various means, including social media, and was designed to attract potential foster parents with diverse backgrounds and family structures. The campaign will continue throughout the upcoming year.*

## **Recognizing the Importance of Culture and Family Connections for Children in Out-of-Home Care**

The department recognizes the importance of maintaining family and cultural connections for all children in the care or custody of the Director. In fact, these principles are embedded into the CFSA and are practiced throughout the continuum of service. Ensuring that children in care maintain a connection to their families, community and culture promotes a sense of self-identity and increases a child's overall wellbeing.

- Through comprehensive case planning, social workers facilitate and maintain cultural, family and community connections for children in care.
- In 2015/16, children and youth in group homes participated in a number of cultural activities planned by the Cultural Committee, including traditional dance, fishing, hunting, and ceremonial activities. The committee meets regularly throughout the year and includes First Nations representatives and elders.
- The department partnered with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to organize this year's annual Cultural Camp in Long Ago People's Place for children and youth in group homes.



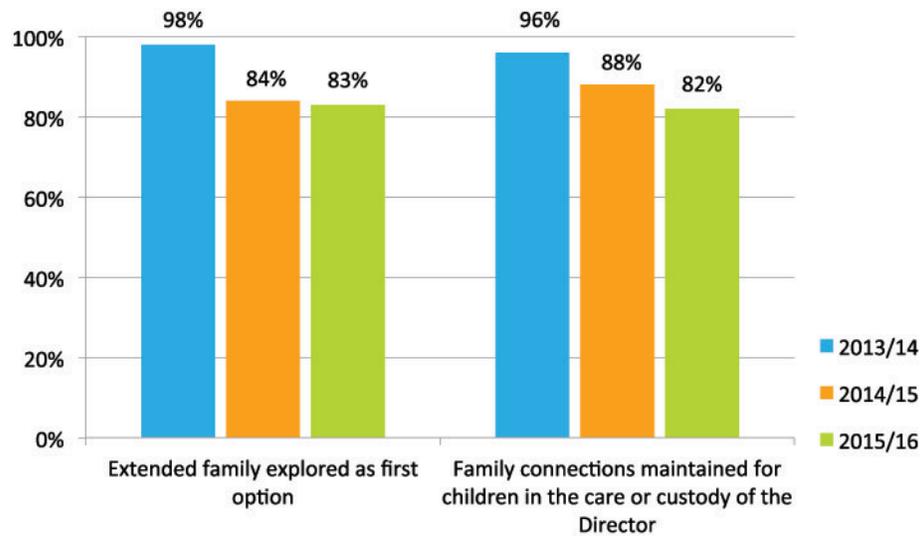
Photo: Government of Yukon

### Maintaining Family and Cultural Connections

When a child requires out-of-home care, placement with extended family is the preferred option to ensure family and cultural connections are maintained and nurtured. Internal compliance audits on a random selection of case files showed that extended family was explored as the first choice for placement in 83% of cases (Chart 8) when out-of-home care was required. While compliance with this service standard was consistent with the previous year, the number of extended family care agreements increased significantly in 2015/16 (page 7 of this report).

When placement with extended family is not an option, maintaining ongoing connections with family is important for the child’s wellbeing. One way to maintain family connections is to ensure family visits take place while the child is in the care or custody of the Director. Although internal compliance audits on a random sample of case files found a high rate of family connections being maintained (82%) in 2015/16, compliance results for this service standard have decreased over the last three years(Chart 8). The department recognizes that there is opportunity for improvement within this service area and will focus on improving compliance over the next year.

**Chart 8: Maintaining family connections**

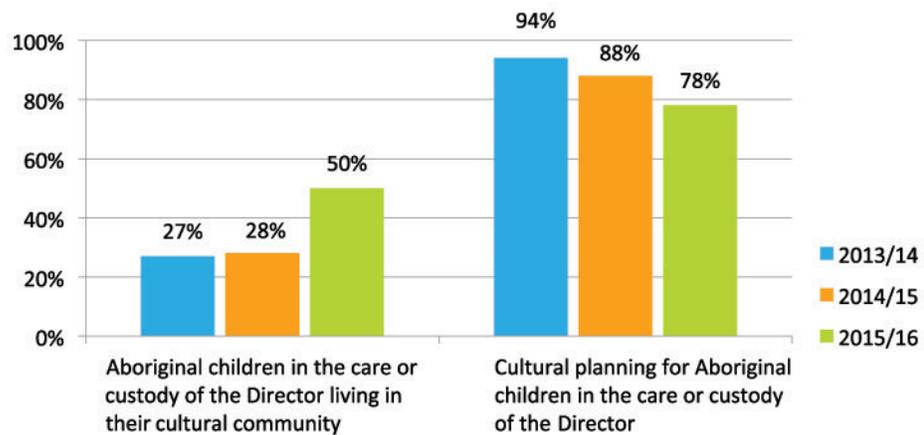


The department understands the importance of placing children, and particularly Aboriginal children<sup>2</sup>, in their cultural communities whenever out-of-home care is required. Placement within cultural communities may not always be possible, however, due to extended family living far away or a lack of available foster homes within the child’s cultural community. Despite these challenges, internal compliance audit results were positive, with audit results demonstrating a 22 percentage point

increase in the number of children in the care or custody of the Director living in their cultural community in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15 (Chart 9).

In addition to seeking out culturally appropriate placements, social workers promote and integrate cultural connections for children in care through comprehensive case planning. For example, Aboriginal children are encouraged to participate in cultural experiences and maintain connections to their communities during their time in care, such as attending ceremonial activities, learning their traditional language, and visiting their home community. Cultural planning rates for Aboriginal children in the care or custody of the Director remained high in 2015/16 at 78%, but rates did show some decline compared to the previous two years (Chart 9), indicating that there is opportunity for improvement within this area of service.

**Chart 9: Cultural placements and planning for Aboriginal children<sup>2</sup> in the care or custody of the Director**



To address the decline in cultural planning in 2015/16, the department will increase training to all staff to ensure cultural planning is integrated during case planning for a child in care/custody. Training will focus on identification of culturally appropriate activities for the child, as well as proper documentation to ensure cultural planning is reflected in case files. In addition, the department will continue to increase internal cultural awareness through ongoing delivery of training focused on culture, diversity and First Nations. The federal government has also committed new investments aimed at improving outcomes for indigenous children and youth. The department will use available funding to support prevention services and program enhancements to improve outcomes for First Nations children, youth and their families.

<sup>2</sup>For this measure, Aboriginal children refers to children of Yukon First Nations, other First Nations outside Yukon, and Inuit or Métis children.

## Supporting Children and Youth at Key Transition Points

Transition and change can be challenging for children and youth, particularly for those who have been in care due to child protection concerns. Youth in care may find the transition to adulthood extremely challenging due to a lack of family support or insufficient basic life skills, potentially leading to high-risk behaviours.

Recognizing the need for increased support for transitioning youth, the department created a Youth Transition Committee in 2014, with representatives from several First Nations, the Yukon Foster Parent Association, and social workers. In 2015/16, the department focused efforts on the development of a service model to improve support service access for youth up to 24 years of age, including youth transitioning out of care. The model, which has since been successfully implemented, allows youth to access a range of support services in one location outside of traditional business hours.

### Youth Transition Planning

To ensure youth receive the support they require to succeed once they leave the care or custody of the Director, early transition planning is key. On March 31, 2016, there were 26 youth aged 16 to 18 years in Yukon in the care or custody of the Director. Internal audit results demonstrate the compliance rate of transition planning for youth 16 years and older remained high in 2015/16, with five of six case files sampled showing transition planning. Previous years' audit results were also positive, with 5 out of 6 case files showing transition planning in 2014/15 and all seven case files demonstrating compliance with this standard in 2013/14.

One way youth are supported in their transitions to adulthood under the CFSA is through formal Transitional Support Service Agreements. These agreements can remain in place until the youth reaches 24 years of age. Support services established under this type of agreement may include counselling, financial supports to allow the youth to continue their education, or living skills training. Each agreement is unique and support services are tailored to the youth's individual needs. Transitional Support Service Agreements were signed with 7 young persons aged 19 to 23 years in 2015/16, compared to nineteen agreements signed in 2014/15.



Photo: Government of Yukon

## Ongoing Staff Development and Organizational Capacity-Building

Department staff involved in child welfare and family support services show their commitment and dedication to protecting children's safety throughout Yukon in their daily work. To ensure staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively fulfill their roles and continually improve service delivery under the CSFA, the department is committed to ongoing training and professional development for all staff members. Ongoing training allows staff to deliver child welfare services in a timely and consistent manner in accordance with policies, procedures and quality assurance standards, resulting in better outcomes for children, youth and their families. In addition to ongoing training, the department will continue to explore opportunities to grow organizational capacity to increase efficiency and service quality.

### **In 2015/16, the department:**

- Provided training to more than 30 child welfare workers in the areas of First Nation culture, diversity, cooperative planning, legislation and policy pertaining to the CSFA, dispute resolution, case management, and client information database systems.
- Continued to enhance the foster parent payment system to improve reliability and ensure timely payments to caregivers. In 2015/16, additional quality assurance measures were implemented to track the success of these system improvements.





## Quality Assurance and Accountability – Auditor General’s Report

The Auditor General of Canada conducted an audit of child welfare programs delivered under the CSFA between 2010 and 2013. The audit results indicated that the department was meeting the majority of the commitments under the CFSA; however, the report did identify several areas for improvement and included recommendations for addressing deficiencies. Immediately following conclusion of the audit in 2014, the department undertook a number of initiatives, many of which were carried forward to 2015/16.

- Recommendation: increase efforts to comply with service standards and policies related to case plans, transitional plans, foster homes and medical/dental examinations for children in the care or custody of the Director, as well as monitoring effectiveness of those efforts.
  - In 2015/16, the department continued to enhance data collection methodology and performance measurement tracking procedures.
  - Following the Auditor General’s report, a review of the methodology applied in the department’s annual Internal Compliance Review was completed and performance measures were adjusted to better track compliance. In an effort to continually improve compliance monitoring, the audit methodology was further refined in 2015/16 to address issues raised during previous audits, such as limited sample size.
  - The department developed a Foster Care Services Action Plan to improve service delivery within this program. Feedback received during the Foster Caregivers Forum held by the department in May 2015 was used to inform the plan. The plan is designed to enhance communication, increase collaboration and partnership, and improve support services for foster caregivers.
  - The department re-developed policies on transitional planning, transition agreements and support agreements to better support youth during and after the transition from care.
  - In 2015/16, the department developed a service model to improve youth access to health and social services programs. This initiative was implemented as a pilot project in August 2016 with the opening of the Integrated Supports for Yukon Youth (ISYY) in Whitehorse.

- Recommendation: acquire a case management system capable of effectively tracking compliance with legislative and policy requirements.
  - The department intends to continue work on the Continuing Improvement Case Management System (CICM) project in 2016/17 to further define detailed system requirements and move towards development of a business case for the project.
- Recommendation: deliver annual reports as required under the CFSA in a timely manner that includes more quantitative information and measures, explanations of how these measures differ from expectations, and plans for addressing any shortcomings.
  - The 2015/16 annual report presents quantitative data and measures pertaining to the services standards and policies under the CFSA. The data presented herein, in conjunction with the internal compliance audit, is being used to identify deficiencies in service delivery and develop action plans to address shortcomings.



## Commitment to Continual Improvement

The 2015/16 internal compliance audit results highlighted many strengths of the department in providing child welfare services and meeting the mandate of the CFSA. The audit also identified opportunities for improvement in the areas of cooperative and cultural planning, notification of First Nations and maintaining ongoing contact with children in the care and custody of the Director.

The department is committed to improving and maintaining compliance with all service standards to ensure positive outcomes for children, families, First Nations and community partners. The department intends to achieve this objective through the implementation of both short and long term initiatives.

In 2016/17, the department will:

- Communicate the results of the internal compliance audit to all managers, supervisors, and social workers;
- Review and potentially refine audit methodology to address limitations identified in 2015/16, such as small sample size;
- Explore opportunities to streamline data collection methods to improve the robustness of the quality assurance tools currently in place;
- Review the standard (core) training program currently in place to identify opportunities for additional alignment with service standards;
- Develop and deliver targeted training to managers/supervisors and social workers on service standards, with particular focus on low compliant standards; and
- Complete an evaluation of the current service delivery and staffing model in Yukon communities.

In an effort to continually improve service delivery, the department will also undertake a number of longer term improvement initiatives, including:

- Evaluate options for implementation of a child welfare practice framework. Practice frameworks are designed to incorporate consistent, evidence-based decisions into service delivery principles, improve program performance through ongoing evaluation, and most importantly, achieve positive outcomes for child and families involved in the child welfare system;
- Update policy and program materials as required to implement program improvement initiatives on an operational level; and
- Implement a five-year Human Resources Strategic Plan to recruit and retain qualified staff (currently underway).

## Looking Ahead

This year represents the sixth year the CSFA has been in force. During that time, the department has made significant progress on a number of initiatives to meet the mandate and key principles introduced when the CFSA came into effect in 2010. The upcoming year promises to build upon this foundation, with an introduction of new services, program improvement initiatives, and further opportunity for collaboration with First Nations.

In August 2016, the Integrated Supports for Yukon Youth (ISYY) centre opened its doors, providing youth and their families with a convenient location and supportive environment to access a full range of services. The centre is expected to be a valuable resource to youth in care transitioning to adulthood.

In 2016/17, the department will work towards developing Memorandums of Agreement with First Nation partners, in addition to the agreements already established with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Kluane First Nation. Over the next five years, new federal funding is expected to be made available to the department and to First Nations to support prevention services and improve outcomes for indigenous children and youth. Department funding will be used to enhance program services to reduce the number of children coming into care and increase collaboration with First Nations and their members.

The department is currently preparing to conduct a five-year review of the CFSA. This review will be undertaken by a committee appointed by the Minister of Health and Social Services and will include First Nation representatives as prescribed by the Act. The review will provide an opportunity to evaluate whether the purposes and principles of the CFSA are being achieved and will help inform new initiatives as the department strives to continually improve compliance and quality of service.



Photo: Government of Yukon

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