

# Cross Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Support Needs - FINAL

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## **I. Introduction**

The Government of British Columbia is committed to improving cross-ministry collaboration for youth with support needs and their families/caregivers or circle of support, to facilitate their transition to adulthood.

This *Cross-Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Support Needs* (the *Protocol*) has been developed to:

1. Foster cross-ministry collaboration and information sharing to support individual youth and their families/caregivers or circle of support through the transition process.
2. Promote a cross-ministry commitment to a collaborative transition planning process for individual youth and their families/caregivers or circle of support, which will lead to the development of an individualized transition plan for each youth.

This protocol has been jointly developed by the following ministries and organizations to advance these commitments:

- Community Living British Columbia (CLBC)
- Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)
- Ministry of Education and Child Care (ECC)
- Ministry of Health (HTLH)
- Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA)
- Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS)
- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG)
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR)
- Indigenous Child and Family Service (ICFS) Agencies: *Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services, Secwepemc Child and Family Services, and Northwest Inter-Nation Family and Community Services*
- Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT)

## **II. Background**

Youth may be faced with a number of challenges and opportunities when they are planning for the transition to adulthood, including growing into their identity; expressing their sexuality; establishing social networks and relationships; accepting responsibility for decisions and behaviours, as well as their consequences; establishing and accomplishing education and employment goals; achieving financial independence; pursuing independent living arrangements; and, managing legal issues. For youth with support needs and their families/caregivers or circle of support, a coordinated transition process that begins early will assist in preparing youth for adulthood.

Transitioning to adulthood involves more than identifying and coordinating services. It involves setting goals for all areas of adult life, exploring and adopting adult roles, and making decisions about the future. Parents/caregivers and others play a central role in supporting youth to make decisions and plan for their future. A transition process that

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actively engages and centres the youth will lead to the development of a transition plan to coordinate supports and services and assist the youth to achieve their goals and full potential.

Transition planning is required for all youth with support needs, to facilitate skill development and the identification of, and access to, opportunities and supports needed in adult life. It is important to develop a transition plan, regardless of the funded government supports that the youth will be eligible to access in adulthood. Transition planning must be individualized, as youth have varying degrees of support and funded service needs. The plan must reflect the cultural identity of the youth and their community.

Transition planning for Indigenous youth must consider the youth, their family/caregivers and/or circle of support, community, values, culture, and autonomy of Indigenous communities. In addition, transition planning for Indigenous youth should include collaboration with Indigenous nations, communities, organizations, and the federal government to ensure an integrated and culturally appropriate network of supports and services.

Developing individualized transition plans requires cross-ministry collaboration to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach. This protocol provides the overarching framework to support the transition planning process; cross-ministry support and collaboration is required. At the community level, administrators of signatory ministries and organizations can collaboratively develop agreements or other mechanisms to operationalize this protocol.

### **III. Guiding Principles**

The protocol promotes a collaborative approach among co-signatory ministries and organizations concerning youth with support needs transitioning to adulthood that is:

- youth-centred, trauma-informed, and culturally safe
- comprehensive and integrated across service sectors
- focused on positive cultural identity development and diversity of all youth
- respectful of Indigenous Child and Family Services and Indigenous-nations autonomy and decision-making authorities
- aligned with Jordan's Principle until age 18, and,
- respectful of youths' rights as per the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (including the General Comment No. 11: Indigenous children and their rights under the Convention) and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

Cross-ministry agreements regarding youth with support needs transitioning to adulthood should align with the principles of the protocol.

### **IV. Youth and Young Adults Served**

A youth with support needs may be defined as a person between the ages of 14 up to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday who requires significant additional educational, medical/health and

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social/environmental support, beyond that required by youth in general. Some funded supports can extend to the youth's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday (e.g., Temporary Housing/Support Agreements), while MCFD's Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) program can support former youth in care that may have support needs, up to age 25 (and some SAJE funded supports to age 27); PSSG considers young adults to be ages 18-24. The support is intended to enhance or improve their health, development, learning, quality of life, participation, and inclusion in community.

Youth with support needs may have significant limitations in age-appropriate daily activities at home, school and in their communities, in one or more of the following domains:

- physical abilities
- cognitive abilities
- sensory abilities
- communication skills
- social-emotional development

## **V. Best Practices for Youth Transition Planning**

### **1. Starting Early**

Transition planning for youth should begin at age 14 and may continue beyond age 19 (to the 25<sup>th</sup> birthday for former youth in care) to ensure that there is a coordinated and supported process both during adolescence and into adulthood; some funded supports may continue to the 27<sup>th</sup> birthday for former youth in care. Youth and their family/caregivers or circle of support are central to the transition planning process and are encouraged to actively participate. Starting early allows time to establish the transition planning team that includes professionals, informal community supports and family/caregivers and facilitates timely access to adult services for youth who are eligible.

### **2. Youth Centred**

Transitioning to adulthood must involve the youth and centre around their culture, strengths, goals, and interests. Considering and building from what is going well for the youth can offer a strong foundation for the transition plan as well as understanding challenges. Self-determination for youth can be fostered through the transition planning process to ensure the youth begin to develop independence and responsibility for making decisions about their future.

### **3. Empowering Families/Caregivers or Circle of Support**

Empowering families/caregivers or circle of support to understand transition steps and processes can be helpful in supporting their active participation and when able, leading the transition process for their youth. Families/caregivers or circle of support may offer insights into the strengths and needs of the youth to help develop a robust transition plan.

Families/caregivers or circle of support can help their youth with accessing assessments, applying for identification, opening bank accounts and other important tasks to prepare their youth for adulthood.

### **4. Information Sharing and Collaboration**

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Youth transitioning to adulthood is a shared responsibility and collaboration and information sharing are key in supporting youth during this time. Collaboration may include defining roles of each ministry or crown agency staff, understanding timelines, and preparing for applications to Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and CLBC. Ongoing monitoring and support to reach goals set out in the plan are critical to support the youth. To support youth transition planning, signatory ministries and organizations can coordinate and document the processes for sharing information. This should be done in accordance with any legislative requirements.

### **5. Awareness of Government Supports and Services**

Appendix A outlines the supports and services for youth between the ages of 14 and 27 that are available through key ministries, ICFSAs, crown agencies and PGT. Each organization has responsibility for establishing the specific eligibility criteria for the supports and services it provides.

## **VI. Review**

This protocol will be reviewed by administrators of signatory ministries and organizations every three years to:

- assess and evaluate the effectiveness of cross-ministry collaboration and information sharing; and,
- determine whether roles and responsibilities of signatory ministries and organizations are clear;

Any signatory ministry or organization may ask for a review of the protocol and appendices before the end of the three-year term.

## **VII. Dispute Resolution**

Issues may arise in any cooperative endeavour involving service providers funded by different ministries or organizations. In accordance with the principles that underpin this protocol, dispute resolution will take place as close as possible to the level at which the decisions were made.

For local transition planning issues, youth, family, and other transition planning team members will use the service provider's existing complaint/dispute resolution processes, and may also need to involve the responsible ministry, organization, or authority. Where planning for indigenous youth under the age of 19 involves a disagreement between the federal and provincial governments regarding access to available health and social services, the child-first approach under Jordan's Principle must apply.

When an issue is not resolved locally, it will be raised to the next decision-making level within the appropriate ministry, organization, or authority. As part of this or at subsequent steps in the dispute resolution process, managers and senior administrators may need to discuss issues related to this protocol with their colleagues from relevant ministries, organizations, or authorities, to resolve the dispute as quickly as possible.

## VIII. Appendix A – Government Services and Supports

The following is an overview of government-funded organizations that can be involved in the transition planning process for youth with support needs (ages 14 to their 27<sup>th</sup> birthday). This summary, while not exhaustive, includes a description of the types of services and/or supports provided that may be available to a youth preparing for, and/or entering, adulthood (depending on whether they meet the established eligibility requirements).

Organization	Government Services and Supports
Community Living British Columbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Living supports and services for eligible adults with developmental disabilities as well as adults who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and who also have significant difficulties with activities of daily living (ages 19 and older)</li> <li>• Supports adults and their families and/or support network to plan for the future and changes throughout their life by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting adults to learn about the different planning choices they have</li> <li>• Supporting people to choose how they want to plan and who they want to plan with</li> <li>• Developing and implementing individuals’ Personal Summary</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A range of supports and funding options that are person-centred and flexible that honour choice, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Supports (e.g., Independent Living, Shared Living, Staffed Living)</li> <li>• Community Supports (e.g., Employment, Community Inclusion, Learning)</li> <li>• Well-being Supports (e.g., Individual and Family Wellness Support [formerly respite], support coordination)</li> <li>• Individualized Funding (e.g., Direct Funding, Host Agency Funding)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sharing material for potential and current students (financial resource access, program eligibility, services, and technology access)</li> <li>• Contact information regarding post-secondary institutions financial aid and accessibility services</li> <li>• Grants, scholarships, tuition waivers, and loan funding for students including those with permanent disabilities and former children and youth in care.</li> <li>• Adult special education programs with a focus on developing vocational and employment skills</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Tuition Waiver Program and Learning for Future Grant for former children and youth in care (no age restriction for application)</li> </ul>
<p>Ministry of Children and Family Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of services for children and youth (ages 0-18) with support needs and their families (e.g., At Home Program, Family Support Services such as respite, Autism Funding, Key Worker services for families of children and youth with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder)</li> <li>• Foster homes and guardianship and transition planning assistance for children and youth in care</li> <li>• Financial support and services for former children and youth in care to advance educational, rehabilitative and/or employment opportunities</li> <li>• A range of specialized mental health services including community-based Child and Youth Mental Health services, Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre (housing support services options for youth with significant psychiatric and behavioural difficulties)</li> <li>• Youth Custody and Youth Justice services: Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services (assessment and treatment services to adjudicated youth).</li> <li>• Provincial Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing</li> <li>• Programs for at-risk or sexually exploited youth</li> <li>• Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS)</li> <li>• Pilot family connections centres providing developmental and goal-focused services to support children, youth and families, including transition planning to adulthood</li> <li>• Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) Program: for youth with support needs with comprehensive transition planning needs (ages 16 – 19<sup>th</sup> birthday)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes funded supports for youth in care (ages 14 - 19<sup>th</sup> birthday) and former youth in care (ages 19 - 27<sup>th</sup> birthday)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Indigenous Child and Family Service (ICFS) Agencies</p>	<p>Responsibility for administering parts or all of the <i>Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides family support and preservation, guardianship, and caregiver services</li> <li>• Housing services and transition planning assistance for children and youth in care</li> <li>• Youth empowerment and community engagement</li> <li>• Cultural activities and programs</li> </ul>

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<p>Ministry of Education and Child Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding to boards of education for children and youth with support needs</li> <li>• Individualized Education Plan development and transition goals as part of that plan</li> <li>• Work experience / pre-employment preparation</li> <li>• Provincially and locally-developed curriculum</li> </ul>
<p>Ministry of Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home and Community Care may provide health care and support services, including home care nursing, community rehabilitation (occupational and physical therapy), and other community-based services</li> <li>• Primary Care - Transition between Paediatrician and General Practitioner care (including Shared Care/Collaborative Models of Care)</li> <li>• Regional Developmental Disability Mental Health Services – ages 14 and older</li> <li>• Adult Community Mental Health and Addictions Services</li> <li>• Child and Youth Addiction services</li> <li>• Health Authority Specialized Programs (e.g., Vancouver Island Health Authority Neuropsychiatric Clinic)</li> <li>• Acute psychiatry – adult and adolescent units</li> <li>• BC Children’s Hospital Transition to Adult Care Resources (ON TRAC model and tools)</li> <li>• A range of services for children and youth with support needs and their families (e.g., programs and services offered through the Sunny Hill Health Centre at BC Children’s Hospital)</li> <li>• Developmental Disorder and Mental Health (DDMH) (MCFD funded)</li> <li>• Developmental Disorder and Substance Use (DDSU) (MCFD funded)</li> </ul>
<p>Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated Child &amp; Youth (ICY) Teams (pilot)</li> </ul>
<p>Ministry of Social Development &amp; Poverty Reduction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment programs</li> <li>• Income Assistance and Disability Assistance [Persons with Disabilities (PWD)]</li> <li>• General/Health Supplements and Programs (e.g., medical and dental benefits, bus pass, etc.)</li> <li>• OASQ can assist individuals and families (with individuals eligible for CLBC services) with problems or barriers.</li> </ul>
<p>Ministry of Public Safety &amp; Solicitor General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial assistance and benefits to victims of an injury due to violent crime</li> <li>• Medical/health related services</li> <li>• Vocational services</li> <li>• Disability aids</li> <li>• Home modification, vehicle modification/acquisition</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income support/lost earning capacity at age 19 for claimant who remains unemployable due to an injury from a violent crime</li> <li>• BC Corrections, Probation Services and Youth Justice             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Integrated Program Agreement between Justice and Community Partners (October 2023)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Crime Victim Assistance Program</li> </ul>
<p>Public Guardian and Trustee of BC</p>	<p>Child and Youth Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts as a co-guardian (property guardian) with MCFD and ICFSAs for youth under continuing custody orders and in some situations, under temporary custody orders. The PGT also acts as property guardian under the <i>Adoptions Act</i> s.24 or the <i>Infants Act</i> s.51. When property guardian, the PGT is responsible for the protection of the financial and legal interests of children and youth.</li> <li>• Invests and manages funds for children and youth from a number of different sources by statute as trustee</li> <li>• PGT property guardian clients for whom the PGT also serves as trustee, may voluntarily enter into an agreement with the PGT to hold and manage their funds after reaching the age of majority up until the age of 27</li> </ul> <p>Services to Adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation on situations of abuse, neglect or self-neglect of adults or youth nearing the age of majority, who may not be mentally capable of managing their own legal/financial affairs</li> <li>• Acts on behalf of adults who have been deemed mentally incapable, including as a temporary substitute decision- maker regarding healthcare decisions</li> </ul> <p>Estate and Personal Trust Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration of Public Guardian and Trustee Educational Assistance Fund for eligible former children and youth in care</li> </ul>

## **IX. Appendix B - Glossary of Terms**

**Children in Care/Youth in Care:** Children under age of 19 years who are in the custody, care or guardianship of a director or a director of adoption as designated under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)*, the *Adoption Act*, or the *Family Law Act*. For the purpose of this protocol, the term ‘youth in care’ is used to refer to those over the age of 14.

**Indigenous Child and Family Service Agency (ICFSA):** An Indigenous agency that has responsibility for the administration of all or parts of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)*, through negotiated agreement with MCFD under the *CFCSA*.

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** A documented plan developed for a student with support needs that describes individualized goals, adaptations, modifications, and services to be provided, and includes measures for tracking achievement.

**Informal Community Supports:** Family, friends, neighbours and/or community members who provide social support, which can include advocacy and/or help with monitoring services. Additional support is derived from participation in associations (e.g., social clubs and groups) or community activities that have public participation (e.g., sports teams, horticultural society, faith communities, etc.). Formal government-funded services augment, rather than replace informal community supports.

**Jordan’s Principle:** A child-first approach to ensuring that jurisdictional funding disputes do not prevent or delay First Nations children from accessing available health and social services.

**SAJE Navigator:** an MCFD staff responsible for providing expertise in transition planning for youth in care (aged 14 – 19.5yrs), and for eligible youth with complex/comprehensive support needs (age 16-19).

**SAJE Guide:** an MCFD staff person who acts as the main point of contact for former youth in care that have transitioned to adulthood (age 19.5 – 25<sup>th</sup> birthday).

**Personal Summary:** A document created by a youth or adult and their family, with support from others as needed, that helps CLBC and other planning partners get to know who the person is, what is important to and for them and, where relevant, their support requirements. It can assist CLBC and others with planning, and with gathering information to complete assessment documents required to request support and/or funding through CLBC. The document is the individual and/or family’s personal property.

**Primary Support Coordinator:** the primary professional—at the FCC, MCFD CYSN, or MCFD Guardianship—providing services to the youth and/or family, who acts as the main point of contact for the youth’s *My Support Plan*, service delivery and goal setting.