

# Indigenous Child and Family Service Newsletter

Ministry of Children & Family Development | January 2024



This newsletter is meant to share information and support the ministry's commitment to ongoing consultation and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, partners and governments to develop legislation and services consistent with the provincial *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* as well as the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

We will listen to the children, youth and families we serve, knowing their voices and experiences are central to the creation of services that truly meet their needs.

**All dates and timelines may be adjusted if needed.**

## Improved Supports: Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE)

The ministry continues to develop new and improved supports for eligible youth and young adults up to age 27 through the Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) program.

As of November 20, 2023, young adults are now able to access the new SAJE Life-skills, Training and Cultural Connections Funding to cover the costs of programs or activities focusing on life-skills across several learning domains. This funding allows them to develop their life and vocational skills and promote cultural learning and connections.

Young adults participating in the SAJE program who are on an Agreement with Young Adults (AYA), Temporary Housing Agreement (THA), or Temporary Support Agreement (TSA) can now access the new \$1,500 per year Mental Health and Counselling Benefit.

Find more information at: [gov.bc.ca/youthtransitions](https://gov.bc.ca/youthtransitions) and [agedout.com](https://agedout.com)

## Co-developing a new funding model for First Nations Jurisdiction over Child and Family Services

In September 2023, the ministry sent out a discussion paper inviting Indigenous Peoples to begin co-developing a new funding model to support First Nations Jurisdiction over child and family services.

The ministry is extending the engagement timelines based on feedback and invites you to join in the co-development.

The feedback to date assists the ministry in identifying emerging themes at the request of engagement partners. A one-page summary of this feedback has been created and can be found here: [gov.bc.ca/codevelopfundingmodel](https://gov.bc.ca/codevelopfundingmodel)

### Engagement Opportunity

- One-page summary of feedback: [gov.bc.ca/codevelopfundingmodel](https://gov.bc.ca/codevelopfundingmodel)
- To participate or ask questions, please contact Andrew Hutton at: [andrew.hutton@gov.bc.ca](mailto:andrew.hutton@gov.bc.ca)

*The Ministry of Children and Family Development gratefully acknowledges that it conducts its work on the territories of First Nations Peoples throughout British Columbia.*

## Spring 2024 Legislation Amendments

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the engagement sessions thus far regarding the Spring 2024 legislation amendments. The input and wisdom that has been shared has been extremely valuable.

We are continuing the engagement in 2024, focusing our discussions and drafting on Section 6 Declaration Act Agreements and the use of appellate courts. An email invitation with dates and times for these sessions will follow this newsletter. If you wish to participate in these engagements, please contact Tanisha Bonsdorf:

[Tanisha.Bonsdorf@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Tanisha.Bonsdorf@gov.bc.ca)

## Proposed Pathway Forward: Indigenous Child Welfare Director (ICWD)

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit partners are invited to provide their input on the development of the Indigenous Child Welfare Director (ICWD). Feedback from previous spring and summer engagements envisions that the ICWD provides practice oversight and supports services delivered to Indigenous children and families. This includes overseeing the implementation of Indigenous jurisdiction.

The purpose of upcoming engagements is to co-develop the job profile and competencies of the role. Please visit our website for information about engagement sessions upcoming in early 2024. We are also happy to accept written feedback or schedule individual meetings.

### Engagement Opportunity

- Find information about the ICWD at: [gov.bc.ca/IndigenousChildWelfareDirector](http://gov.bc.ca/IndigenousChildWelfareDirector)
- To send feedback or to request information, please email: [richel.donaldson@gov.bc.ca](mailto:richel.donaldson@gov.bc.ca)

## Provincial Design of Youth Emergency Shelter (YES) Service Model

The ministry is creating a Youth Emergency Shelter (YES) service as part of the ongoing implementation of the network of care and Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS) transformation. This service is designed to assist vulnerable youth seeking voluntary, low-barrier support by providing immediate shelter, crisis intervention, and safety while fostering trust and connections to access additional support.

YES Services also provide outreach and drop-in day programming to youth in the community. More information can be found on the SHSS webpage:

[gov.bc.ca/ServiceProvidersSHSS](http://gov.bc.ca/ServiceProvidersSHSS)

The ministry is actively engaging across the province – including working with existing emergency shelters and Indigenous service providers, partners, and Rights and Title holders. There will be more engagement opportunities in 2024 as broader project engagement occurs.

### Engagement Opportunity

#### Winter 2023/2024:

- Modelling the system and engagement with existing YES models, Indigenous community partners, and youth/families
- Broader engagement with Rights and Titleholders, Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies, social workers, and those with lived experience
- If you wish to express interest in participating in upcoming provincial design opportunities (under development) contact: [shsstransformation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:shsstransformation@gov.bc.ca)



## Services for Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN)

Reciprocal Consulting is co-facilitating community-based engagement sessions. The next session is on January 22, 2024 with Nzen'man' Child and Family Development Centre. To participate or co-facilitate a session, contact: [teamleads@reciprocalconsulting.ca](mailto:teamleads@reciprocalconsulting.ca)

Engagement with First Nations Rights and Titleholders continues. The ministry is grateful to all who have participated so far. Visit [govTogetherBC](https://www.govtogetherbc.ca) and subscribe for updates to be notified about further engagement sessions happening in January 2024 as dates become available.

### Engagement Opportunity

- Subscribe to receive updates at: [engage.gov.bc.ca/children-and-youth-support-needs](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/children-and-youth-support-needs)
- Search "CYSN Engagement Updates" on [gov.bc.ca](https://www.gov.bc.ca) for more details
- For assistance contact: [mcf.cysnengage@gov.bc.ca](mailto:mcf.cysnengage@gov.bc.ca)

## Policy, Practice and Regulation Changes

### Policy Updates for Children and Youth with Support Needs Services

Recent policy clarifications are confirming the authority under which CYSN services are delivered. Based on valuable insights from families, CYSN Family Support Services will now operate separately from the legislation that child protection is provided under. CYSN Family Support Services will be guided primarily through policy, rather than the Child, Family Community Service Act.

This clarification reflects the ministry's commitment to prioritizing CYSN as a voluntary service. The policy clarifications support the philosophical shift from a focus on child safety to more broadly focusing on quality of life for children, youth, and their families. Increased transparency in information sharing for families, and a more family-centered collaborative approach will ultimately lead to a more trauma-informed delivery model.

### Regulation Changes to Enable the Province to Withdraw from Child Protection Proceedings

The ministry continues to enact regulation changes to bring Bill 38: Indigenous Self-Government In Child And Family Services Amendment Act into force and support Indigenous communities exercising their inherent jurisdiction in child and family services. In December 2023, regulatory amendments were made to establish the court proceedings to enable returning Indigenous children and youth from the Province's care to their Indigenous communities. Specifically, the changes create two new court processes:

1. A process for the Province to withdraw from child protection proceedings so an Indigenous Authority may implement their law and assume provision of services for the child involved in the proceeding
2. A process for the cancellation of continuing custody orders so an Indigenous Authority may formally assume custody of the child to whom the order relates

These changes will come into force on January 15, 2024. We thank Indigenous partners for all the collaboration and support that carried through this important project!

To learn more, please contact Patrick Tucker at [Patrick.Tucker@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Patrick.Tucker@gov.bc.ca) or by phone at (250)-419-8700.

