

# Children and Youth with Special Needs Service Framework Development Summary of Engagement and Research Findings



## Supporting Families

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is developing a service framework to better support children and youth with special needs (CYSN) and their families. The framework will guide how the ministry provides and funds CYSN programs and services and will be ready for phased implementation in spring 2020.

## The Engagement Process

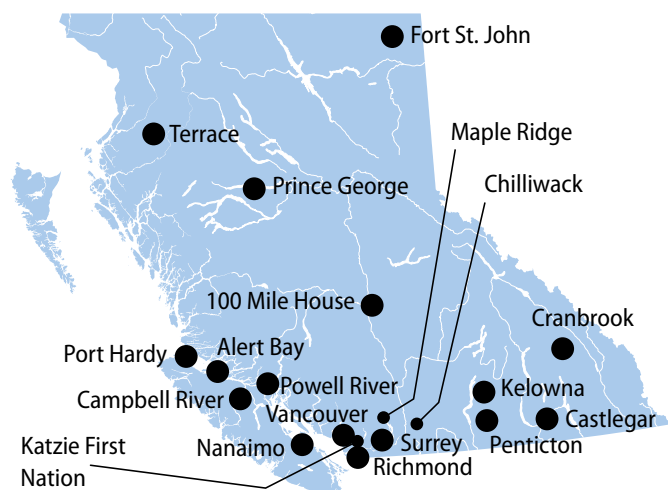
MCFD contracted two firms to do research and identify opportunities to improve access, quality and coordination of CYSN services and programs:

- Reciprocal Consulting led the user-experience research with Indigenous families; and
- KPMG conducted user-experience research with families, including but not limited to Indigenous families and communities.

Over 1500 individuals, from a broad range of families and service providers, shared their experiences with CYSN services through community workshops and research surveys. Phone interviews were also conducted with rural and remote participants and providers, as well as subject matter experts.

## Where We Went

In total, 19 communities participated in community engagement sessions.



## Other Research

MCFD staff also analyzed information from other sources, such as:

- Reports provided to MCFD from the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth
- Reports and articles provided by partners and external organizations
- Academic research literature

## What We Heard

The user experience research and research from other sources complement each other and echo many of the same themes. These include:

### Accessibility – Can families attain the right services at the right time?

- Finding and accessing CYSN services can be overwhelming and confusing for families and service providers
- Access is often linked to a family's financial, personal and community resources
- Growth in demand for CYSN services has likely exceeded growth in funding
- Families living in remote communities have less access to information about services and greater distances to travel for service
- Timeliness and consistency of service is critical for early intervention
- Transportation can be a barrier
- The array of services available to families is generally right, but more is needed

## Eligibility – How are families deemed eligible for services?

- ➔ Families find wait times long to gain the diagnosis needed to access CYSN services
- ➔ Varying methods of determining eligibility across CYSN programs makes it challenging for families to navigate
- ➔ Eligibility requirements are often poorly communicated to families and are difficult to understand
- ➔ Each program has a separate intake process making it inefficient

## Equity – Do the current array of services support children and families in a fair and equitable way?

- ➔ Low-income, Indigenous, English Language Learning (ELL) families and those living in remote areas report having difficulty attaining services
- ➔ Support needs for children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder are not being met
- ➔ Families and service providers describe that children in care have greater access to CYSN services compared to children with their families
- ➔ There is a need for trauma-informed practices to support equity

## Cultural responsiveness – Do services meet cultural needs?

- ➔ Many Indigenous families experience racism and discrimination when accessing and receiving CYSN services
- ➔ Many Indigenous families prefer to not access services because of racism and a lack of trust and fear of MCFD services
- ➔ Indigenous families could benefit from Elder involvement in CYSN programs and services that could facilitate greater access to traditional teachings and cultural activities and place emphasis on the importance of Elders and grandparents having a role in raising children
- ➔ Satisfaction with CYSN services is lower in ELL and Indigenous communities
- ➔ A lack of culturally appropriate services was identified

***“Delays in service are detrimental to children”***



## Inclusion – Do services support children and families to be included in society?

- ➔ Families value early interventions and inclusion supports
- ➔ More support for transition planning into kindergarten and adulthood is needed
- ➔ The cost of equipment that aids accessibility and inclusion is a challenge for many families

## Family Support – How do services support families to care for themselves and their child?

- ➔ Families need respite to stay healthy and participate in community life
- ➔ Families are burdened by the amount and tedious nature of paperwork to access services
- ➔ Families are asking for more support to manage and coordinate services
- ➔ Families feel isolated and want support so they can participate more fully in their communities

## What We Learned

- ➔ The complement of services is generally right, but more is needed
- ➔ The current system favours families with resources to find and access CYSN services
- ➔ Culturally responsive and trauma-informed services are needed
- ➔ Family support, including case coordination, is desired
- ➔ Families regard a one-stop, hub infrastructure as ideal

## Next Steps

Draft Framework Consultation:	Fall 2019
Implementation Planning:	Winter 2019
Public Release of Service Framework:	March 2020
Begin Phased Implementation:	Spring 2020