

## Honouring Past Wisdom

In November 2022, Premier Eby and Minister of Children and Family Development, Mitzi Dean, committed to engaging in deeper consultation with parents and caregivers, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, communities, experts and practitioners, and others with lived experience to reset and discuss their priorities for co-developing a new approach to accessing CYSN services that will better meet the needs of Indigenous children, youth, families and communities. As the ministry engages more deeply on services for children and youth with support needs, feedback received through earlier engagements provides learnings to build from. These earlier engagements were conducted by two research firms contracted by MCFD (Reciprocal Consulting and KPMG) to identify opportunities to improve access, quality, and coordination of CYSN services. Engagement occurred through 2019-2021 with 19 communities and 1500 individuals including families and service providers.

Findings from these engagements are summarized below under themes of Cultural Responsiveness, Equity, Eligibility, Accessibility, and Inclusion:

### **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 English Language Learning (ELL) and Indigenous communities
- A lack of culturally appropriate services was identified

### **Equity**

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

- Low-income, Indigenous, 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

### **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

### **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

### **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

The full engagement report and further background on CYSN engagements to date can be found [here](#). Upcoming engagements will be posted on [govTogetherBC](#).

For more information or to register for engagement sessions please contact the project team at [MCF.CYSNengage@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MCF.CYSNengage@gov.bc.ca)