



Department of Family Services

Ilagiitsiarniq

Family Wellness Strategic Framework

2023-2028

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2023-2028



drawing of an Inuit family by Salomonie Pootoogook (used here with the artist's permission)

February 19, 2024

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

Message from the Minister of Family Services	1
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INTRODUCTION

Child Welfare and Family Support in Nunavut	3
The Indigenous Experience of Child Welfare	4
Department of Family Services Current Actions Underway and Completed	6
The Family Wellness Strategic Framework	7

PRINCIPLES AND THEIR APPLICATION

Inuit Engagement	8
Partnerships and Integration	9
A Whole of Government Approach	10
Accountability to Nunavummiut	11
Inuit Societal Values	12

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Strategic Priorities and Targeted Goal	14
Priority 1: Organizational Excellence	18
Priority 2: Adoption, Foster Care and Kinship Service	20
Priority 3: Inuit-Specific Services	22
Priority 4: Investigations	24
Priority 5: Case Management	25
Priority 6: Support for Out-of-Territory (OOT) Children	27
Priority 7: Recruitment and Retention	28

LOGIC MODEL FOR THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK	31
--	-----------

MONITORING PROGRESS AND MEASURING IMPACT	33
---	-----------

TRANSFORMATIVE ROADMAP	35
-------------------------------	-----------

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN: DEVELOPMENT, ENGAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	37
--	-----------

Stepping Forward	38
------------------	----

REFERENCES	39
-------------------	-----------

APPENDIX 1: Family Wellness Strategic Plan - Actions for Consideration	47
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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



Honourable Margaret Nakashuk,
Minister of Family Services

As Minister of the Department of Family Services, I am pleased to introduce the Family Wellness Strategic Framework developed in direct response to the 2023 OAG Report. This plan represents our steadfast commitment to accountability and to fostering positive change for our community's well-being.

We recognize the vital role the Department plays in enhancing the lives of families across our region. The insights provided by the OAG Report have been pivotal in reshaping our strategies and reaffirming our dedication to ensuring a brighter future for all.

This Strategic Framework charts a course toward a future where family wellness stands at the forefront of our priorities. It is a blueprint designed not only to address the challenges highlighted in the report but also to proactively create an environment where families and employees thrive.

Central to our approach is a **whole-of-government response**, underscoring the indispensability of collaboration and engagement internally and with Inuit organizations and external partners. We firmly believe that successful implementation of this framework and the realization of our vision hinge upon these collaborative efforts.

Accountability remains central to our mission. Through collaboration, innovation, and a forward-thinking approach, we aim to not only meet but exceed the expectations outlined in this Strategic Framework. We are committed to continual improvement and transparency in our efforts to better serve our community.

I express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to shaping this plan. Together, we embark on this journey, confident in our ability to effect meaningful and lasting change that enhances the well-being of our families and strengthens our community.

Qujannamiik, Ma'na, Koana, Thank you and sincerely,

Honourable Margaret Nakashuk,
Minister of Family Services

INTRODUCTION

We can enable children to be human beings by being respectful, loving and understanding. We can make children to be like fragile eggs by being overly protective and taking away their responsibility to their own actions. We can make a harden rock-like person by neglecting a child's primary needs and treating him/her with too much negative criticism, making the child feel worthless. (Inunnguiniq presentation, 9)

Within our culture, a child is raised by the full community based on the name given and how the namesake relationship is formed. This gives the child a sense of belonging and characteristics that we want the child to grow into within the community. The child is raised from birth with sense of purpose and a network of relationships within which to grow.

Sandy Kownak Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Family Services

Could all of Nunavut be involved in *Inunnguiniq* – collectively raising our children – supporting families when they need support and looking out for children's safety and wellbeing together? In the current context and with the challenges facing Nunavut families, there is a need to return to a community approach to child welfare, understanding that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

The Government of Nunavut is seeking ways to re-envision its role in child welfare. In May 2023, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) released a third performance report on Nunavut's child and family services describing many failings of the current system to protect children. The state of crisis that is currently facing the Department of Family Services (DFS) Family Wellness (FW) Division has been well documented.¹

The reports are an urgent call for changes in how the Department of Family Services (DFS) carries out its child protection responsibilities under the *Child and Family Services Act* legislation. Particular problem areas pointed to the way the department conducts investigations and documents suspected harm toward children and youth, as well as how it carries out prevention and non-crisis intervention to support families. Gaps were uncovered in how DFS develops and carries out plans of care for children and youth who are under the care of the department – who are in foster care and group homes or have been placed for adoption. Other concerns have been raised about a lack of orientation and training for new staff, gaps in following department standards and procedures, training on the job, and incomplete record keeping.

Rather than make new recommendations in the 2023 follow-up audit, the OAG referred back to recommendations in 2011 and 2014 that have not been fully implemented. The OAG also recognized these challenges facing Family Services:

The Department of Family Services' inability to meet its responsibilities is the result of severe, chronic gaps in critical areas such as staffing, housing and office space for

¹ Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2011, 2014, 2023.

employees, and training of employees. We also found that the department is not taking appropriate steps to provide a safe work environment for its employees.

Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2023, p. iii

In public statements following the release of the report, the Department of Family Services accepted all of the findings from the OAG. On May 30, 2023, the Minister of Family Services, the Hon. Margaret Nakashuk stated she is deeply committed to “making the changes that need to be made.”

My officials are moving forward with a roadmap that lays out a whole-of-government approach. Meaningful collaboration will be key. Work will include all levels of the department and government, as well as community and Inuit stakeholders.

Government of Nunavut, 2023b, p. 1

During a two-day televised hearing of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on September 19th and 20th, 2023, Deputy Minister Jonathan Ellsworth echoed the need for change. He spoke about the actions underway in the department to address the recommendations and build stronger, better supports for children, youth and families in need.

At this crossroads, the Government of Nunavut has an opportunity to create a child welfare and family support system that is Nunavut-made and Inuit-specific, in the same way that Nunavut families can be supported to move from crises to stability, and Inuit children can heal and grow along with their families.

Child Welfare and Family Support in Nunavut

The Nunavut Department of Family Services (DFS) was created in 2013 when the large department of Health and Social Services was split apart. Its governing legislation was inherited from the Northwest Territories on the formation of Nunavut and does not reflect an Inuit worldview or Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

DFS carries out its mandate through five divisions: Corporate Management, Poverty Reduction, Career Development, Income Assistance, and Family Wellness. These supports aim to strengthen families and communities to fulfill a vision of “*a caring community where all Nunavummiut thrive.*”

The overall mission of the Department of Family Services is to “*enhance the well-being and self-reliance of Nunavummiut through integrated and innovative services.*”

In order to better integrate its services, the department is moving toward a “One Client – One Plan” model. This would involve community-based staff working closely together to better provide

these supports and make it easier for Nunavummiut to access services that meet their individual and family needs.

The Family Wellness Division at DFS delivers child welfare services in each community. These services are defined in the *Child and Family Services Act* and include the two pillars of child welfare: family support and the protection of children. Community Social Services Workers (CSSWs) and Family Resource Workers (FRWs) provide support and referrals to families who request help and also investigate reported suspicions of abuse or neglect of children. If children are considered to be at risk of harm, they may be “taken into the care of the Director” temporarily or for longer periods of time according to “the best interests of the child” as determined by the Family Wellness (FW) team and the court system.

Each stage of the child welfare process needs to be carefully thought out and involve the child’s parents and the children themselves if possible. Ideally children remain with their immediate or extended families while the family receives supports but this is not always possible. Children and youth may be placed in foster homes, kinship care (family members or adults that the children are close to) or group homes. It’s usually best if out-of-home care can be provided in the child’s community or another community in Nunavut. Sometimes for their safety or to receive the treatment they need; children and youth are cared for outside of Nunavut. There is a hope that these children and youth can be reunited with their families, but this also isn’t always possible. These youth may “age out” of the child welfare system at ages 16 and up but are entitled to transitional support until the age of 26.

It becomes apparent that there are many steps in the child welfare journey. There is a need to ensure that children, youth and their parents’ rights are protected; children and youth are physically, culturally and emotionally safe wherever they live; and that service providers and caregivers are safe and supported.

The Indigenous Experience of Child Welfare

For Inuit and all Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the history of child welfare is a painful one. Early Christian missionaries and other Europeans introduced western values and favored family structures that focused on two parents and their children rather than the broad family groupings that worked together and traditionally raised children.² Relocation to permanent settlements impacted family roles and relationships and the ability to provide for children and other family members. Cultural knowledge, skills and identity were eroded.³ Next came the residential and day schools that removed children from their families and communities, further weakening kinship ties and inter-generational relationships.⁴ Residential schools were replaced by the “60s scoop” (1960s to 1980s) and now the “millennial scoop” (1990’s to the present) where Inuit and other

² Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2006; Kinnon, 2014

³ Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 2013

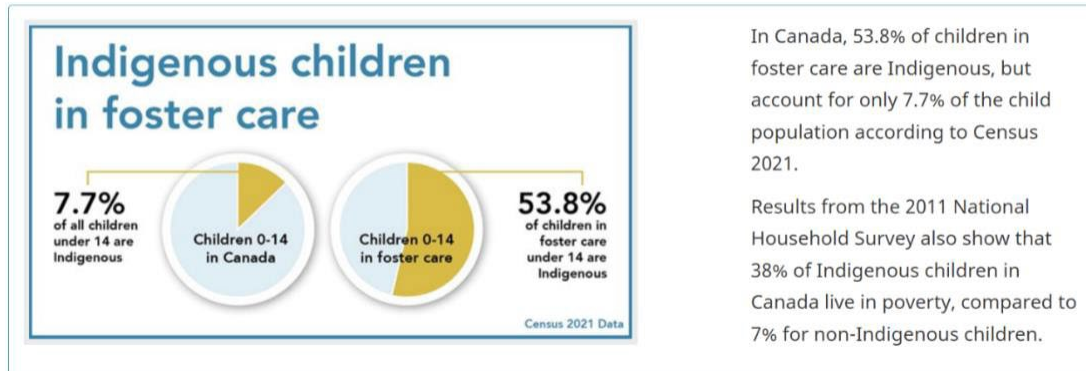
⁴ Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2012; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015

Indigenous children are disproportionately taken from their families and placed in non-Inuit foster care, group homes and adoptive homes.⁵

In Canada today, 53.8% of children in foster care are Indigenous, but account for only 7.7% of the child population according to Census 2021.

Indigenous Services Canada, 2023⁶

Indigenous children in foster care



According to the Qikiqtani Truth Commission, an in-depth look at the effects of colonialism between 1950 and 1975 concluded that over time, the residential school system (comparable to the child removals today) “created a deep cultural and generational divide between children and parents that often proved hard to repair.” In some cases, children lost the Inuktitut language and could not communicate with parents and grandparents, adopted southern values and were taught that their parents’ traditional values and habits were lesser than the imposed colonial ones. “Ultimately, cultural teachings, beliefs, values and skills were compromised.”⁷

Every Inuk who appeared before the QTC testified to the traumatic effects of relocations, medical evacuations, or schooling. Many expressed frustration that the government made decisions without asking Inuit and without addressing the consequences of the decisions. They felt deep cultural and personal losses resulting from severing family ties and ties to the land...

Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 2013, p. 25

This unfortunately is the base upon which we have created a “modern” child welfare system that isn’t equipped to heal past trauma, restore culture or fully support Inuit families. It is past time for change.

In response to the over-representation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system, First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations and the Government of Canada co-developed federal

⁵ Tungasuvvingat Inuit, 2022

⁶ <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1541187352297/1541187392851>

⁷ Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 2013, n.p.

legislation on child welfare services. *Bill C-92: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* was passed in 2019.⁸ While the legislation respects Nunavut's right to pass its own legislation, the Act affirms the Indigenous inherent right to self-government in relation to child and family services and provides principles for the delivery of services to Indigenous children and families. Principles include: 1) an Indigenous understanding of the best interests of the child, 2) cultural continuity, and 3) child and family rights. The legislation has led to new partnerships and greater involvement of Indigenous organizations in service delivery in other provinces and territories.

The Way Forward

Nunavut is at a crossroads. The change needed in delivery of Nunavut child welfare and family support services is bigger than improved performance of the current child welfare system. It is increasingly clear that western child welfare approaches built on colonial ideals are causing great harm to Indigenous Peoples.

Nunavut has the opportunity to break the cycle of multi-generational trauma from family disruptions, the removal of children from their homes and communities, and out-of-home "care" that fails to nurture Inuit culture, language and family values.

Our young territory of Nunavut was founded with pride in Inuit identity and a drive for self-determination. Inuit have a legacy of resistance and perseverance as survivors of colonialism, intergenerational trauma, residential schools, forced relocation, and loss of culture and language.

Nunavut is ready for transformational change and our government is confident in our collective ability to achieve it. We are determined to revitalize and realize our shared vision for our territory. We have much to do.

Government of Nunavut, 2023b, p. II-1

There are new and emerging practices in Indigenous child welfare that Nunavut can draw on, including Inuit-specific approaches and partnerships in Nunatsiavut, Inuvialuit Settlement Region, and urban Inuit organizations.

Department of Family Services Current Actions Underway and Completed

These are some of the actions that are underway:

- submitted Business Cases for additional resources,
- filling staffing vacancies in the highest need communities first (goal of hiring of 20 CSSWs by January 2024),

⁸ Government of Canada, 2019

- developing a Workplace Violence Strategy and Occupational Health and Safety Framework,
- launched an online information management system for front-line workers (Matrix),
- embracing partnership with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Regional Inuit Associations via the *Child Welfare Working Group formed to support the Nunavut Partnership Committee*,
- updating and revising the Family Wellness Division Standards and Procedures,
- developed and launched a counseling and support service for front-line workers,
- developing a comprehensive and mandatory Core Training Program (including Inuit cultural competence, mental health first aid, family resource worker training, foster care coordination and manager training),
- Renewed comprehensive and collaborative relationship with Representative for Children and Youth (RCYO);
- Recruited a Quality assurance manager.
- working with Nunavut Housing Corporation and Community and Government Services to ensure housing and office space are allocated efficiently and using modular units,
- contracted the development of an internal and external strategic communications plan to expand communications within the department, the GN and communities,
- finalized the development of a Family Wellness Strategic Framework, and
- committed a dedicated full time staff member to the Inter-Provincial Desk to case manage relationships and issues in other jurisdictions while children are under care.

The Family Wellness Strategic Framework

“Bold systemic change is required where young people are heard, relationships are reset, power is shared, communities are engaged, resources are enhanced, and Inuit knowledge and beliefs are validated and incorporated into new ways of keeping children safe and supported.”⁹

As many other strategies have taught us, it takes broad involvement and wide acceptance for a new direction to succeed, in the same way that “it takes a community to raise a child”—or the Inuit cultural concept of *Innunguiniq*: the making of a human being—effective implementation also requires commitment, time and resources. Following the OAG report, the department has crafted a Strategic Framework known as the Family Wellness Strategic Framework, referred to as “Ilagiitsiarniq” in Inuktitut, meaning family wellness, not just the immediate family but the extended family, will not be a piece of paper or a “wish list.” It will be a “robust plan, working as a collective across the Government of Nunavut that is sustainable, measurable and accountable” (Deputy Minister Jonathan Ellsworth).¹⁰

⁹ A Long Wait for Change: Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children in Newfoundland and Labrador: Executive Summary: Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Newfoundland and Labrador, September 2019.

¹⁰ Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts, Government of Nunavut, 2023

Our Strategic Framework for Family Wellness serves a dual purpose: providing DFS with a cohesive structure for strategic decision-making and outlining steps to align department operations with the objectives of the Child and Families Services Act (CFSA) while delivering high-quality support to children, youth, and families. Crafted with a focus on systemic issues and cultural safety, this framework articulates our values, core principles, and identifies strategic priorities. It aligns organizational goals with broader objectives and serves as a reference point for stakeholders.

Building on this foundation, the framework establishes the direction for developing the Family Wellness strategic action plan, emphasizing collaborative efforts with rights holders and stakeholders. Comprehensive insights were gathered through various sources, including guiding documents, focused discussions, consultations within DFS headquarters and regional teams, internal reviews, and recommendations from the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts' report. The groundwork involved a thorough document review, environmental scan, SWOT, and gap analysis, alongside an examination of Family Wellness staffing, services, and operating practices.

An in-depth internal engagement with the Family Wellness team and executive identified gaps, priorities, and activities to address challenges and understand existing barriers. Following this, the strategy framework was developed, with continuous collaboration underscored by seeking feedback from the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). This framework was further shared with the Government of Nunavut Policy Officials Committee, Central Agency, and Deputy Minister Committees to gather valuable insights.

This culmination of efforts reflects our commitment to formulating a detailed and effective roadmap for enhancing family well-being in Nunavut. By continuously seeking feedback and engaging with stakeholders, we ensure a nuanced understanding of challenges, opportunities, and priorities within the Family Wellness division.

The remaining sections of this report include:

- Five Guiding Principles for both the development and the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan,
- Seven strategic priorities
- Strategic direction
- Transformative Roadmap
- Next steps: Development of a Strategic Action Plan, Engagement and Implementation
- Proposed Actions for consideration and consultation (Appendix 1)

PRINCIPLES AND THEIR APPLICATION

These principles support the work needed to address OAG recommendations and deliver high quality Inuit-specific services for children, youth and families. It is important that these principles go further than just being a framework for how the plan is actioned; they must also be broken down into concrete, measurable actions themselves.

1. Inuit Engagement

The challenge of promoting a future with healthy children and strong families must be addressed in the present. It will be necessary for all stakeholders to work together to improve the [Child and Family Services Act], current social services practices, and parenting capacity. As such, commitment is needed from individuals, communities, and government to keep children safe and to strengthen Inuit families.¹¹

For the Strategic Framework to be successful, ongoing engagement of Inuit and all Nunavummiut is needed. Community members, leaders, Elders, land claim organizations, non-profit and community agencies, parents, grandparents, schoolteachers and administration, service providers and governments all have a role to play in creating “a caring community where all Nunavummiut thrive” (the DFS mandate). Nunavummiut have been successful in collaborating on issues such as suicide prevention and poverty reduction and have made significant strides in this work. This knowledge and experience can be applied to creating family support and child welfare services, policies and legislation that turn the tide on child apprehensions, foster care, out-of-territory placements and out-of-community adoptions for Inuit children.

Through the development and implementation of this Strategic Framework, the Government of Nunavut can begin this process by engaging early on with Inuit partners (in accordance with the Child Welfare Working Group) in the co-development of a Nunavut model for child welfare. At the same time, the Department of Family Services will raise awareness of child welfare and family support issues with a territorial communications plan. The Family Wellness Strategic Framework will form the basis for ongoing partnerships and collaboration.

Other ideas for engagement and communications activities include promoting a shared responsibility for child safety and well-being, creating a youth advisory council (including those who are or have been in care), and holding regular Town Hall meetings in communities.

2. Partnerships and Integration

Family wellness is actively re-establishing partnerships with community-level organizations to ensure that the delivery of programs is made available to the clients we serve, respecting this particular matter of services being accessible for alcohol and drug counselling and parenting programs. In addition, in this fiscal year we have approved several Inunnguiniq projects that will be funded through the Poverty Reduction Division.

Jonathan Ellsworth, Deputy Minister of Family Services¹²

¹¹ Knowledge Sharing Forum: A Review of Child Welfare Practices in Nunavut: December 15th-17th, 2009. Department of Health and Social Services, February 2010.

¹² Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts, Government of Nunavut, 2023b, p. 4.

Stronger partnerships and a new approach to client services will increase quality and effectiveness while making best use of expertise and resources. The Department of Family Services has begun a number of actions to enhance child welfare partnerships at the territorial, regional and community levels. For example, DFS and partners established a multi-agency Nunavut-wide Child Abuse and Neglect Response Agreement¹³ and continues to co-chair the committee that is implementing the agreement. The Deputy Minister meets regularly with the Representative for Children and Youth as well as with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and regional Inuit organizations through the Child Welfare Working Group to address concerns and collaborate on finding solutions.

Better integration of DFS programs and services is another priority. A One Client–One Plan model will make income assistance, career development, poverty reduction and family support services easier to access and to deliver through the Family Wellness Offices. Another area for improvement explored in the televised hearings was closer, client-centered collaboration internally within the Government of Nunavut.

Externally, DFS will also pursue advice and support from the OAG to address its findings and recommendations. The department will draw on promising practices from across Canada on Inuit-specific and Indigenous child welfare and family support programs. A longer-term goal is to explore partnerships with Inuit organizations in- and out-of-territory for the delivery of selected child welfare programs such as prevention, family support, custom adoption, etc. as enabled in *C-92: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*.

3. A Whole of Government Approach

We are deeply committed to making the changes that need to be made. Under our direction, our officials are moving forward with a roadmap that lays out a whole-of-government approach. Our solutions and action plans focus on safeguarding Nunavut's children and youth. Meaningful collaboration is key. Work includes all levels of the department and government; as well, it will require community and Inuit stakeholders to engage and, when necessary, the department will take steps to shift priorities to respond to the changing environment.

Jonathan Ellsworth, Deputy Minister of Family Services¹⁴

While respecting and valuing departmental mandates and challenges, the Government of Nunavut has work to do to demonstrate *Piliriqatigiinniq/Ikajuqtigiinniq* (working together for a common cause). A “Whole of Government” approach, as recommended by the OAG and endorsed by the Premier of Nunavut, is needed to create effective solutions to persistent challenges facing the government. Concrete actions are needed to increase inter-departmental

¹³ Surusinit Ikajuqtigiit Nunavut Child Abuse and Neglect Response Agreement. September 2020, (30 pages). Accessed online at: [https://assembly.nu.ca/sites/default/files/TD-310-5\(2\)-EN-Surusinit-Ikajuqtigiit.pdf](https://assembly.nu.ca/sites/default/files/TD-310-5(2)-EN-Surusinit-Ikajuqtigiit.pdf)

¹⁴ Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts, Government of Nunavut, 2023a, p. 9.

cooperation in delivering community-level services and supporting staff. DFS is committed to working collaboratively with other departments to address the OAG recommendations and ensure service quality moving forward.

The Family Wellness Division has begun this process with a series of inter-departmental meetings to come to a common understanding of how to implement a “whole of government” approach, as well as to identify specific areas for collaboration and innovation. Immediate goals include hiring, housing and providing adequate office space for DFS staff, matching financial resources to community needs, and improving working relationships between health and social services service providers.

Other collaborative relationships will include working with the Departments of Education and Health to enhance awareness of child welfare reporting responsibilities and family wellness services. In partnership with Inuit organizations and the Department of Justice, DFS aims to complete a legislative review and consultation process for the development of a “made in Nunavut,” Inuit culturally specific *Child and Family Services Act*.

4. Accountability to Nunavummiut

I'm hopeful that we will see positive change and the reasons why I am hopeful is because you have seen four of your Deputy Ministers appear before you over the last few days, they have been open, they have been honest, they have been transparent, they have expressed a willingness to change, they have expressed an interest in accountability.

Jim McKenzie, Office of the Auditor General of Canada¹⁵

Nunavummiut rightly expect government services to:

- Reflect Inuit values and principles,
- Be effective and efficient, and
- Support and protect children, youth, and families who are in need.

DFS will continue to focus on serving clients and will be transparent and accountable for the changes required to deliver on its mandate. DFS has been remiss in its record-keeping and client follow-up and is taking immediate measures to improve communications and provide non-confidential information on services to Inuit organizations, other partners, and the public. Through a Quality Assurance and Monitoring Program, DFS will monitor and document its work and share results on a regular basis.

The Department of Family Services is committed to transparency and accountability through annual reporting to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. This report will serve as a means to provide comprehensive updates regarding the department's status and progress on specific tasks related to the Family Wellness Strategic Plan. It will also offer a granular view of progress on specific tasks, outlining objectives, milestones, and setbacks encountered.

¹⁵ Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts, Government of Nunavut, 2023b, p. 166

Overall, the commitment to ongoing reporting reflects the Department of Family Services' dedication to fulfilling its mandate, serving the needs of Nunavut residents, and ensuring effective governance through transparent communication with the Legislative Assembly.

Other ideas for action include incorporating mechanisms for gathering feedback from stakeholders, including community members, service recipients, advocacy groups, and other government agencies. This feedback helps inform future decision-making and program improvements.

A robust communication campaign and public service announcements about the role of child welfare, what parents need to know about how and where to get support when they are struggling at home and outlining the steps to reunification of families where removals have taken place. This was indicated as a great need by a paper examining the views of Arviat mothers on the child welfare practices, where many families did not understand the reasons that children were apprehended or what could be done to get children back once they were removed from the home.¹⁶

5. Inuit Societal Values

“Children were immediately taught about their family relationships and kinship ties and to be able to work well with others, and most of all, children were encouraged to respect and obey their Elders and all parents in their community.”¹⁷

Inuit live by their societal and family values and the Government of Nunavut has been guided by these principles from its start in 1999. Inuit societal values (ISV) need to be applied at every level of government from frontline services, policy and program development, partnerships and executive decision making. In responding to the performance audit and seeking the assistance of Family Services staff, other departments, and partner organizations, DFS has experienced *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* – respect for others, relationships and caring for people, and *Piliriqatigiinni/ Ikajuqtiinni* – working together for a common cause. We must now put into practice *Qanuqtuurniq* – being innovative and resourceful and through commitment to our mandate to serve and provide for the families and communities of Nunavut – *Pijitsirniq*. We believe that ISV must be concretely applied in strategic actions and day-to-day operations.

Some other suggestions for applying ISV in DFS services include:

- using alternative spaces and land experiences for family meetings,
- facilitating cultural activities as healing,

¹⁶ P. Johnston, S. Tagalik and R. Amarudjuak, 2022

¹⁷ Karetak, Joe, Frank Tester & Shirley Tagalik. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: What Inuit Have Always Known to Be True. Fernwood Publishing, September 2017.

- understanding and building on relationships between individuals, families, and communities (extended family network),
- applying *Innuinguiniq* (Inuit childrearing knowledge and practices) in family support, and
- providing more opportunities for connections between Elders and youth.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Since initiating the strategy development, we have collaborated with consultants to undertake the following steps. The creation of these strategic directions involved a thorough and organized approach, utilizing a SWOT analysis to assess DFS's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats.

Recognizing the significance of stakeholder engagement, we incorporated diverse perspectives to shape the organization's mission, vision, and core values. A comprehensive environmental scan was conducted, and a communication plan was developed to facilitate stakeholder engagement. This involved planning and coordinating with stakeholders, allowing DFS to gather diverse insights.

The engagement process began internally, involving all regional offices and an in-depth consultation with the Family Wellness division. This included engagement with regional supervisors, managers, and directors through team sessions, ensuring that feedback was collected not only from the executive team and regional directors but also from the frontline staff. This ongoing process ensures that the plan incorporates insights from various levels within the organization.

This strategic framework is based on five critical strategic directions that serve as the pillars and foundation for this plan.

1. **Organizational Excellence:** The overarching goal of achieving the highest possible standards and performance across all aspects of Family Wellness. It involves the continuous improvement of processes, systems, and practices to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and overall success, as well as fostering cultural awareness and ISVs in all practices. In essence, Organizational Excellence is a holistic and dynamic concept that involves creating a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, fostering adaptability and achieving exceptional results across the board.
2. **Human Resource/ Workforce Planning:** Human Resource Planning within the strategic framework of child and family services is the deliberate and proactive process of anticipating, identifying, and addressing the workforce needs essential to achieving our mission in promoting the well-being and welfare of children and families. It involves the following key elements: Needs assessment, Staffing, Recruitment, Employee Well-being, Infrastructure and Housing, and Inuit Employment Plan.
3. **Investing in our people:** Investing in our people and building internal capacity within this framework refers to a deliberate and structured effort to enhance the skills, knowledge,

and overall capabilities of the division's workforce through training, professional development, and supervision. This involves initiatives aimed at developing, supporting, and empowering employees to ensure they are well-equipped to contribute effectively to the department's objectives.

4. **Partnerships and Engagement:** refers to a strategic focus on continuing to foster meaningful connections, collaborations, and interactions both within and outside the department. This involves actively seeking and nurturing partnerships, learning from external entities, and maintaining effective communication channels. Furthermore, the success of this plan hinges on the dedication and services offered by our internal partners within the Government of Nunavut, as well as the support, collaboration, and engagement of our external partners.
5. **Quality assurance and Accountability** refers to a comprehensive system designed to ensure the organization's operations align with established quality standards, maintain accountability, and comply with relevant acts and regulations. It aims to develop a compliance structure with a focus on Data Collection, Documentation, Analysis and Development aims to ensure the division consistently delivers high-quality services, complies with regulations, and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

Strategic Priorities and Targeted Goals: A Blueprint for Enhanced Family Wellness

This Strategic Framework comprehensively outlines seven key areas of focus, where the Division of Family Wellness is proactively and collaboratively channeling its resources to significantly elevate the well-being and prospects of children, youth, and families engaged with our services under the Child and Family Services Act. These priorities, carefully chosen and well-defined, are the pillars of our mission, outlining actionable and specific goals that chart the Division's course towards making substantial, positive changes in the immediate and foreseeable future. Each priority in our strategic framework is supported by a series of actions that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. These actions will be detailed and incorporated into the implementation plan to ensure effective execution and progress tracking.

These actions are the fundamental elements that will steer our division towards its envisioned future. They are designed to ensure that every child, youth, and family we serve experiences a profound and lasting impact from our enhanced services, contributing to our ultimate outcomes:

1. Ultimate Outcomes:

- Enhanced well-being of families, children, and communities in Nunavut.
- Children living in safe and supportive families and communities.
- The best interests, protection, and well-being of children are met.
- Healthy and well supported team of professionals providing services to Nunavummiut.

2. Intermediate Outcomes:

- Protection from abuse, harm, and neglect for all children in Nunavut, delivered in a timely, equitable, and culturally appropriate manner.
- Supporting children within the context of their family and extended family to the greatest extent possible.
- Community involvement in supporting and promoting the best interests of children and the well-being of families.
- An accountable, continuously improving child welfare and family support system that is Inuit-specific and involves all levels of government and society.
- High-quality, Inuit-specific programs and services delivered to children, youth, and families through qualified and competent staff.
- Reduction and addressing of risk factors contributing to child maltreatment.

Our seven strategic priorities, aligned with these outcomes, are:

1. **Organizational Excellence; *Enhance Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness:*** Introduce advanced internal protocols and systems to elevate efficiency, ensure greater transparency, and enhance the effectiveness of family services and child welfare operations, setting a new standard in organizational excellence.
2. **Adoption, Foster Care, and Kinship Services; *Comprehensive Training and Support Enhancement:*** Develop and implement a robust training curriculum for prospective adoptive and foster families, coupled with reinforced kinship care support, providing essential resources and assistance to relatives responsible for childcare, thereby nurturing stronger family units.
3. **Inuit-Specific Services for Inuit; *Culturally Proficient Preventative Service Design:*** Craft and execute early-intervention services uniquely reflective of Inuit families, emphasizing the preservation of cultural identity. Integrate traditional knowledge and practices into service delivery, recognizing and respecting the distinct cultural narratives and needs of Inuit communities.
4. **Investigations; *Standardized Investigative Framework:*** Implement uniform investigative procedures to guarantee consistency, fairness, and integrity in all investigations. Establish robust communication channels with law enforcement and governmental bodies, enhancing collaboration and efficacy in investigative processes.
5. **Case Management; *Individualized and Enhanced Case Support:*** Strengthen case management practices to ensure more personalized and effective services are provided

to each child and family, focusing on individual needs and circumstances to deliver optimal support.

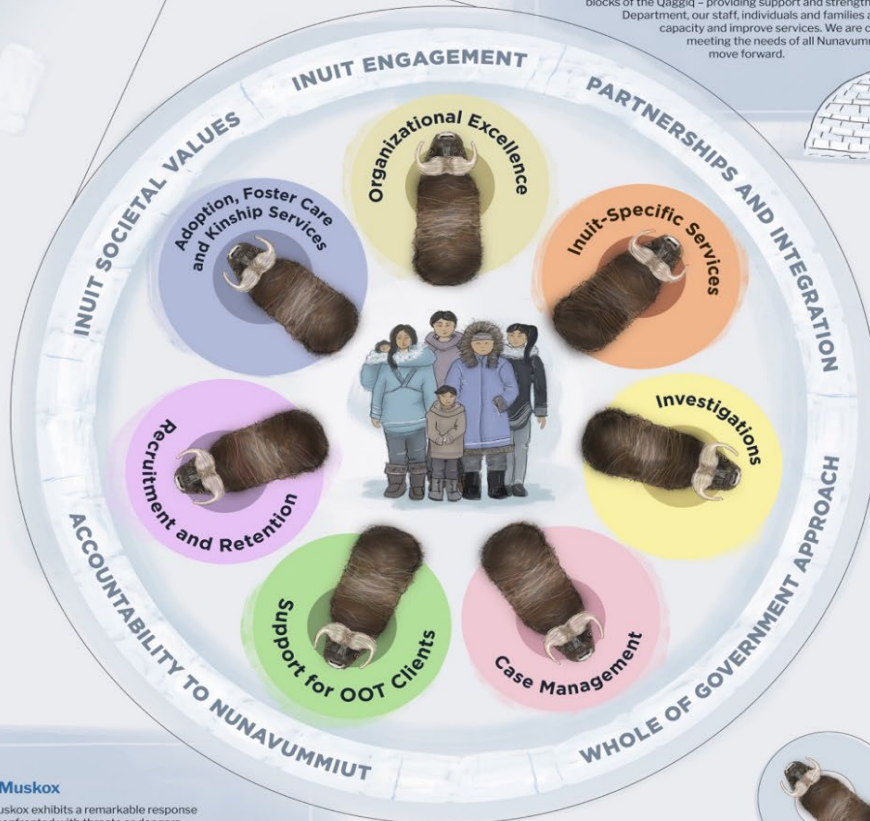
6. **Support for Out-of-Territory (OOT) Clients; *Comprehensive Support for Families*:** Offer holistic support services tailored for families and children residing outside the territory, ensuring their unique challenges are addressed. Develop a vigilant monitoring system to ensure consistent and effective support for all children and youth, regardless of location.
7. **Recruitment and Retention; *Innovative Staff Development Strategies*:** Implement creative and effective strategies to attract and retain skilled professionals within the organization. Foster a nurturing and supportive work environment that encourages growth, innovation, and long-term commitment among staff, thereby enhancing service quality and team morale.

Supporting Family Wellness Ilagiitsiarniq

Guiding Principles

The Qaggiq

The Qaggiq serves as an Inuit gathering place, where Inuit come together to share knowledge, celebrate, heal and foster justice. Our guiding principles for strategic action reflect the foundation blocks of the Qaggiq – providing support and strength for the Department, our staff, individuals and families as we build capacity and improve services. We are committed to meeting the needs of all Nunavummiut as we move forward.



The Muskox

The muskox exhibits a remarkable response when confronted with threats or dangers.

Through an instinctive display of cooperation, adult muskoxen align themselves shoulder to shoulder, creating a formidable barrier against the impending threat. Within this defensive formation, the young muskoxen find refuge, shielded from harm's reach. By maintaining their collective unity and eschewing the instinct to flee, the muskox herd establishes an almost impenetrable defense. This tightly knit formation serves as a powerful deterrent, warding off threats and safeguarding the herd from potential harm.

This innate survival strategy observed in muskoxen finds resonance in the development of the Family Wellness Strategic Action Plan which aims to create an environment that nurtures and protects children, while also promoting and assisting the development of healthy families.



Priorities



Organizational Excellence



Adoption, Foster Care and Kinship Services



Inuit-Specific Services



Recruitment and Retention



Investigations



Support for OOT Clients



Case Management



Priority 1. Organizational Excellence

I fear that not enough is being done to ensure the safety of our children.... Given the crisis situation that we find ourselves in, the challenges that the Government of Nunavut has in ensuring the safety of our children and youth, I wholeheartedly agree that the government must provide additional resources to meet the needs of the current crisis situation...we need to be reactionary, but we also need to be proactive, not just putting out the fire, but really killing the spark.

Adam Lightstone, MLA¹⁸ ed hearing, Day one September 19, 15-16, 24)

The Family Wellness Division has established 'Organizational Excellence' as its foremost priority, with a focused commitment to substantially reducing risks and ensuring the safety of children, youth, and families in need. This priority is deeply rooted in a comprehensive approach that includes:

1. **Rigorous Adherence to Standards and Proactive Support:** Our staff are unwavering in their dedication to meet established standards and guidelines, ensuring rapid and thorough responses to referrals, that includes thorough investigations into possible cases of abuse and neglect. We will use both quick actions and long-term plans to help improve the overall well-being of our clients.
2. **Dynamic Workforce Development:** Understanding the urgency of these services, we are dedicated to promptly addressing any staff vacancies, with a special focus on communities most in need of Community Social Services Workers or Family Resource Workers. This ensures equitable distribution of services and uninterrupted support across all regions.
3. **Robust Training and Employee Empowerment:** To guarantee the highest standards of service delivery, all staff, whether current or newly recruited, will partake in an exhaustive onboarding process. This includes mandatory in-depth training on our Standards and Procedures Manual, a comprehensive understanding of the diverse programs and services available that are culturally safe. Such training is pivotal in equipping our staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively serve Nunavummiut.
4. **Systematic Transformation and Process Enhancement:** The initial phase of our department's transformation is marked by a strategic push from both territorial and regional management to refine systems, structures, and processes. This enhancement is crucial for enabling our staff to surpass legislative requirements in child welfare, including meticulous investigations, tailored care plans, and consistent follow-up for all children and youth in care.

¹⁸ Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts, Government of Nunavut, 2023a, p. 15-16, 24

Key Immediate Outcomes:

- **Unwavering Compliance and Enhanced Human Resource Capacity:** We aim for adherence to standards, policies, and legislation while strengthening our workforce through strategic recruitment and development.
- **Advanced Training and Skills Development:** Our focus includes elevating the skills and competencies of our staff through ongoing, detailed training programs.
- **Health and Safety- Work Culture:** We are dedicated to creating a workplace where employee health and safety are not just priorities but core values.

Strategic Outputs and Deliverables:

- **Revised Standards and Procedures Manual and Policies:** Publishing an updated, clear, and comprehensive manual to guide all operations within the department.
- **Innovative One Client – One Plan Model:** Implementing a consistent and unified service model across all DFS services.
- **Dedicated Quality Assurance and Staff Development Initiatives:** Establishing a continuous quality assurance program and a robust human resources plan for recruitment and retention.
- **Enhanced Workplace Safety and Support Systems:** Introducing extensive strategies for workplace violence prevention and a comprehensive health and safety framework.
- **Streamlined Communication and Feedback Channels:** Developing new methodologies for effective communication, change management, and feedback gathering from both clients and staff.

These strategic elements are instrumental in steering the Family Wellness Division towards its critical goal of reducing risks and enhancing the welfare of vulnerable children, youth, and families. The integration of these deliverables and outcomes into our Strategic Framework signifies a pivotal advancement in our capacity to deliver safe, effective, and high-quality services. As we progress in detailing the specific timelines for these initiatives, we remain steadfast in our commitment to excellence and the betterment of the communities we serve.

Priority 2. Adoption, Foster Care and Kinship Services

I just want us all to take a moment to acknowledge that though we are talking about children in care today, the issue of the '60s Scoop of our children has been going on for generations. In the past, the system was not our own system, and we must consider our own legacies as leaders and the impact that the work that we do as public servants and as legislators has on people for generations. I again would like to acknowledge those families and individuals who are impacted by foster care to say that as we are deliberating today and seeking answers and solutions, that you are first and foremost in our thoughts.

Janet Pitsiulaaq Brewster, MLA¹⁹

The Division of Family Wellness has identified the enhancement of foster care, kinship care, and adoption services as a strategic priority, with a focus on providing a nurturing family environment for children requiring out-of-home care in Nunavut. This priority underscores the importance of maintaining cultural and community connections, particularly for Inuit children and youth, and emphasizes the provision of local care to keep children connected to their ancestral lands and traditions. Key elements of this strategic priority include:

1. **Community-Focused Foster and Kinship Care:** Intensifying efforts to recruit foster and kinship caregivers within Nunavut, particularly Inuit families from local and neighboring communities, to provide culturally resonant care.
2. **Comprehensive Caregiver Support:** Implementing a thorough assessment process for caregiver suitability and providing substantial initial and ongoing training and support. Recognizing caregivers as critical partners in child welfare, the strategy includes respect, engagement, and adequate support for these caregivers, including financial compensation and access to daycare and afterschool programs.
3. **Enhancing Adoption Practices:** Working collaboratively with Inuit organizations to refine adoption and custom adoption legislation, ensuring the practices are culturally aligned and provide long-term stability for children and youth.
4. **Removing Barriers and Enhancing Caregiver Support:** Proactively addressing financial and practical challenges in foster care by providing sufficient support, including respite care, and offering training that covers Inuit childrearing practices and trauma-informed care.
5. **Building Support Networks and Community Engagement:** Proposing the establishment of a Nunavut foster care association and a kinship care network, along with a platform for fostered children to support each other and address significant issues.

¹⁹ Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts, Government of Nunavut, 2023a, p. 17

In aligning with the strategic priority to elevate foster care, kinship care, and adoption services in Nunavut, the Department of Family Services is committed to a series of immediate outcomes and deliverables that aim to create a nurturing and culturally aligned environment for children requiring out-of-home care. This priority is centered on maintaining connections to Inuit culture and community, with a focus on local care for children and youth. The following are the immediate outcomes and deliverables integral to this strategic priority:

Key Immediate Outcomes:

- **Ensuring the Well-being of Children in Foster Care:** Children in foster care are to receive the essential care and support they need, focusing on their overall well-being and development.
- **Empowering Caregivers:** Foster parents, kinship caregivers, and adoptive parents will be thoroughly prepared for their roles through ongoing training and enhanced engagements. They will be treated with respect, actively engaged in the caregiving process, and receive the necessary support to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.

Strategic Outputs and Deliverables:

- **Innovative Foster Parent Recruitment Strategy:** Implementing a new strategy to attract more foster parents, particularly focusing on addressing the specific needs and challenges within the community.
- **Enhanced Training and Support for Caregivers:** Providing comprehensive training and support to all foster caregivers in Nunavut, including foster parents, kinship caregivers, and adoptive parents, to ensure they are well-equipped for their roles.
- **Expanding Resources for Family Reunification:** Broadening the scope of resources and services available to parents and guardians to facilitate the reunification process, wherever appropriate.
- **Regular Monitoring and Evaluation:** Conducting quarterly reports on the training provided to foster parents, the support available to them, and identifying any gaps in resources.
- **Specialized Foster Care Management:** Developing specialized foster care caseloads in all regions, ensuring tailored support and attention to the specific needs of each case.
- **Maintaining a Current Foster Parent Inventory:** Keeping an up-to-date and concise inventory of foster parents, including those currently fostering children and those interested in fostering, to ensure efficient resource management.

- **Compliance and Quality Assurance:** Regular compliance and quality reviews will be conducted to maintain high standards in foster care practices.

In summary, Family Wellness' focus on enhancing foster care, kinship care, and adoption services in Nunavut is crucial for the well-being and cultural preservation of Inuit children in out-of-home care. Emphasizing community involvement, cultural connections, and strong caregiver support, this initiative aims to provide a stable and culturally enriched environment for these children. The commitment to comprehensive training, expanded resources, and consistent monitoring highlights the division's dedication to maintaining high standards in these services. This strategic priority represents a commitment to respect the dignity, culture, and future of every child and family we serve, ensuring a positive legacy for generations to come.

Priority 3. Inuit-specific Services

The Department of Family Services emphasizes Inuit-specific services as a fundamental priority. This strategic focus is rooted in the understanding that Inuit children, youth, and families possess distinct cultural, social, and historical identities that significantly shape their needs and interactions with child and family services.

Key Reasons for Prioritizing Inuit-Specific Services:

1. **Cultural Relevance and Sensitivity:** Recognizing the unique cultural practices, values, and languages of Inuit communities, the department is committed to providing services that are not just respectful of Inuit culture but also tailored to its specificities. This cultural alignment fosters trust and stronger community engagement, leading to more effective outcomes.
2. **Addressing Historical Trauma:** The historical injustices and traumas experienced by Nunavummiut are a critical consideration. The department aims to deliver services that are sensitive to these past experiences and contribute to healing and reconciliation through trauma-informed care.
3. **Fostering Community Empowerment and Self-Determination:** The strategy aligns with empowering Inuit communities and supporting their self-determination. Services co-created with Inuit promote community ownership and control over well-being, essential for sustainable and effective service delivery.
4. **Tackling Unique Social Challenges:** The division recognizes the specific challenges faced by Nunavummiut, such as geographic isolation and limited resource access. Services are thus customized to address these challenges in a contextually appropriate way.

- 5. Promoting Inuit Values and Practices:** Integrating Inuit values, knowledge, and practices into services not only preserves Inuit culture but also offers a holistic care approach, deeply resonating with the community's way of life and respect for traditional practices.

Key Immediate Outcomes:

- **Accessible Programs and Services:** Children, youth, and families have access to essential programs and services, including prevention services and culturally specific programming.
- **Improved Communication and Partnerships:** Enhanced communication and collaboration between DFS/FW, communities, and Inuit organizations.
- **Increased Resources:** Additional resources are made available to communities across Nunavut.

Strategic Outputs and Deliverables:

- **Mental Wellness Support:** Streamlined access to mental wellness support for children, youth, and families through traditional community programming, in collaboration with the Department of Health.
- **Community Support Programs:** Targeted community support initiatives, including new prevention programs and culturally specific family support services.
- **Social Development Funding:** A new prevention-focused social development funding program to bolster community resources.
- **Inventory of Community Programming:** An inventory to track and manage community programming availability across Nunavut.

In summary, the Department of Family Services' focus on Inuit-specific services is vital for respecting the unique cultural, social, and historical needs of Inuit communities. This approach emphasizes cultural sensitivity, healing from historical trauma, and community empowerment. By tailoring services to address Inuit-specific challenges and values, the division aims for effective and holistic care. Key outcomes include accessible programs, enhanced community partnerships, mental wellness support, and targeted community initiatives. This strategy is crucial for promoting the well-being and cultural integrity of Inuit children, youth, and families, ensuring a respectful and empowering legacy.

Priority 4. Investigations

This framework places a high-level emphasis on investigations, recognizing them as a cornerstone in safeguarding the welfare and rights of children and families. This priority is shaped by the necessity to protect those most vulnerable from abuse, neglect, or other harm. The rationale for prioritizing investigations in the strategic framework encompasses several key dimensions:

1. **Critical Role in Child Safety and Protection:** The primary objective of child and family services is the safeguarding of children. Investigations play a fundamental role in detecting and responding to abuse or neglect, acting as a first-line defense in protecting a child's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.
2. **Adherence to Legal and Ethical Obligations:** Investigations are pivotal in meeting the stringent legal and ethical standards that govern child welfare. This involves a meticulous and respectful approach to handling allegations, ensuring compliance with child welfare policies and legislation.
3. **Establishing Trust and Credibility in the Community:** Conducting investigations with thoroughness and fairness is vital for building community trust. It demonstrates the commitment of child and family services to act in the best interests of children while maintaining high practice standards.
4. **Guiding Effective Child and family Interventions:** Investigations yield critical insights that inform the development and implementation of child welfare interventions, guiding decisions to safeguard children and support families effectively.
5. **Proactive Harm Prevention:** Through comprehensive investigations, potential risks and patterns of abuse or neglect can be identified and addressed, playing a key role in preventing future harm and breaking cycles of abuse.
6. **Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Approach:** Investigations in child welfare often require a multidisciplinary approach, involving law enforcement, healthcare, education, and other sectors. Such collaboration ensures a holistic view of each case and comprehensive child welfare considerations.

Key Immediate Outcomes:

- **Standard-Compliant Investigations:** Ensuring that all cases of suspected child harm or abuse are investigated in accordance with established standards.
- **Enhanced Awareness and Implementation:** Increasing awareness and effective implementation of the Nunavut Child Abuse and Neglect Response Agreement.
- **Strengthened Staff Expertise:** Boosting knowledge and confidence among Child and Family Services (CFS) staff in conducting interviews and investigations.

Strategic Outputs / Deliverables:

- **Interviewing Skills Training for Staff:** Providing specialized training to CFS staff to enhance interviewing skills.
- **Compliance and Quality Reviews:** Conducting regular reviews of investigation requirements and providing quality assurance reports to senior management.
- **Escalation Reporting Procedures Manual:** Developing and implementing a new manual for investigation procedures, addressing timelines and necessary performance management actions.

In summary, the plan's focus on investigations is crucial for child welfare, aiming to protect vulnerable children, uphold legal and ethical standards, build community trust, and guide effective interventions. This priority enhances investigation quality through staff training, compliance reviews, and improved procedural clarity. These efforts ensure a robust response to child abuse and neglect, reinforcing the integrity and effectiveness of child and family services, and ultimately creating a safer, more nurturing environment for children and families.

Priority 5. Case Management

Advanced case management is identified as a crucial priority, underpinning the provision of quality service. This priority is centered around continuously enhancing standards and procedures, integrating Inuit Societal Values and Inuit Qaujimagatunqangit, and ensuring robust training and support for staff.

Key aspects of this priority include:

1. **Evolving Standards and Procedures:** The Department of Family Services will regularly update its Standards and Procedures manual, drawing from the best social work practices in Nunavut and other regions, legislative changes, and regulations. This will ensure that the guidance provided to child welfare staff remains current, ethical, flexible, and culturally competent.
2. **Departmental Quality Assurance Program:** The department will develop and implement a comprehensive Quality Assurance Program. This program will provide checks and balances across various operational aspects, including referrals, investigations, and the care of out-of-territory clients.
3. **Client File Reviews and Audits:** Regular reviews and audits of client files and foster and group home care, both within and outside Nunavut, will be conducted by quality assurance staff to maintain high standards of care.

4. **Enhancing Documentation and Data Management:** Acknowledging the recommendations from the OAG, DFS will improve documentation, records, and reporting. This includes accurate case files, client information, and regular reporting to facilitate resource allocation, program improvement, and trend analysis.
5. **Integrated Information System Implementation:** The 2023 launch of the Integrated Information System using Matrix software marks a significant step in streamlining data collection. This system will standardize data gathering across Nunavut, providing essential information for departmental decision-making.
6. **Comprehensive Training and Support:** Intensive training for the Matrix system and other documentation tools will be provided to all staff, accompanied by ongoing technical support. The department recognizes the challenges of transitioning to an electronic record-keeping system and is committed to supporting staff through this change.

Key Immediate Outcomes:

- **Effective Support for Children and Families:** Ensuring that children and their families receive the necessary support through improved case management.
- **Enhanced Client File Accessibility and Completeness:** Achieving more comprehensive and accessible client files while respecting sensitive client data.
- **Improved Information Management Tools:** Providing frontline staff with better tools for information management.
- **Reliable Client and Case Management Data:** Generating dependable data through the Matrix system to enhance oversight, monitoring, accountability, and decision-making.

Strategic Outputs / Deliverables:

- **New Case Management Information System (Matrix):** Implementation of the Matrix system for advanced case management.
- **Matrix System Training:** Providing staff with extensive training on the new Matrix system.
- **Compliance and Quality Reviews:** Regular reviews of case management standards and procedures, focusing particularly on Individual Care Plans, Documentation, and Services, along with quality assurance reports for senior management.

In summary, the Department of Family Service' emphasis on advanced case management is key to improving child welfare services. Integrating Inuit values, the department focuses on updating procedures, implementing a Quality Assurance Program, conducting regular audits, and

enhancing data management with the Matrix system. This strategy ensures current, culturally attuned standards and effective staff support. The ultimate goal is to provide better support to children and families, improve information management, and ensure informed decision-making, thus maintaining high care standards and accountability in Nunavut's child and family system.

Priority 6. Support for Out-of-Territory (OOT) Children and Youth

Providing enhanced support for Out-of-Territory (OOT) children and youth is identified as an important strategic priority. This focus acknowledges the unique needs of children and youth from Nunavut receiving care in other territories and provinces.

The strategic approach encompasses the following elements:

1. **Culturally Competent Care and Community Connections:** Ensuring that children and youth in OOT care receive culturally competent services, maintain connections with their families and communities, and receive safe, appropriate support and treatment.
2. **Adaptation to Medical and Mental Health Needs:** Recognizing that some OOT placements are necessitated by specific medical conditions and the need for specialized services, with a long-term view of reducing reliance on OOT care as Nunavut enhances its youth mental health and community-based care capacities.
3. **Strengthened Staffing and Partnerships:** The recent fulfillment of all Client Liaison Officer positions in key locations and the bolstering of the inter-provincial desk demonstrate a commitment to better address issues faced by OOT children and youth. The aim is to build further partnerships with urban Inuit organizations to offer Inuit-specific services, cultural activities, and community connections.
4. **Expanded Monitoring and Service Obligation Assurance:** Enhancing the out-of-territory program to improve the monitoring of placements and ensuring that group homes, foster care, and treatment agencies fulfill their service obligations.
5. **Regular Tracking and Follow-Up:** Commitment to accurate tracking, regular contact, and follow-up for all OOT children and youth, ensuring their wellbeing is continuously overseen.

Key Immediate Outcomes:

- **Culturally Competent and Safe Care for OOT Children:** Children cared for outside of Nunavut receive culturally appropriate care, with strong links to their families and communities, and safe, effective support and treatment.

- **Service Obligation Compliance:** Ensuring that service providers outside of Nunavut meet their obligations in caring for these children.
- **Support for CSSWs and Staff:** Providing comprehensive support to Child and Social Service Workers (CSSWs) and other staff who assist OOT clients.

Strategic Outputs / Deliverables:

- **Review and Resource Identification for OOT Program:** Conducting a thorough review of the OOT Program to determine the human resources and supports needed for effective delivery.
- **Development of new and updated OOT Standards:** Establishing clear OOT standards that reflect leading practices within the Nunavut context.
- **Updated Interprovincial Placement Agreements (IPPA):** Ensuring up-to-date IPPAs are in place for each child in OOT care, including provisions for courtesy supervision.
- **Compliance and Quality Monitoring:** Implementing compliance and quality reviews to monitor adherence to contact minimums and case reviews for children and youth in OOT placements.
- **Monitoring Plan and Status Reports:** Developing a new monitoring plan for the OOT Program and generating status reports detailing reviews conducted, gaps identified, and proposed resolution strategies.

In summary, the strategic focus on supporting Out-of-Territory (OOT) children and youth from Nunavut ensures they receive culturally competent care and maintain community connections. This includes adapting to their medical and mental health needs, strengthening staffing and partnerships, and enhancing monitoring and service obligations. Key outcomes involve providing culturally appropriate care, meeting service standards, and supporting Child and Social Service Workers (CSSW). Deliverables include reviewing and updating OOT Program standards, and compliance monitoring, all aimed at safeguarding the well-being and cultural integrity of OOT children and youth.

Priority 7. Recruitment and Retention

As a critical component of the Strategic Plan, Priority 7 focuses on the recruitment and retention of staff, acknowledging it as a major challenge in meeting legislative requirements and delivering high-quality child welfare services. This approach includes a comprehensive human resources strategy to address the complexities and barriers associated with maintaining a full, permanent staff complement. Key aspects of this strategic priority include:

- 1. Dedicated Human Resources Strategy:** Developing a targeted strategy to tackle the unique challenges in staffing, including transitioning from reliance on short-term contracts to indeterminate Nunavut Inuit staff model.
- 2. Addressing Staffing Issues:** Identifying key issues such as the perceived low status of social work, degree program requirements, job conditions, and challenges of working in home communities.
- 3. Enhancing Staff Retention:** Implementing solutions for retaining skilled staff in emotionally demanding and isolating roles. This includes workload analysis, coverage for staff on leave, access to clinical supervisors, and trauma support.
- 4. Reviewing Incentives and Compensation:** Collaborating with Human Resources, Finance, and Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs to review and enhance incentives, compensation packages, and flexible work arrangements. Plans are also in place to increase access to permanent housing and office space.
- 5. Comprehensive Staff Orientation:** Ensuring that new hires, including Community Social Services Workers and Family Resource Workers, receive thorough orientation which encompass departmental processes, Inuit Societal Values, legislative requirements, and standards of practice.
- 6. Improved Onboarding and Training:** Adopting a new onboarding approach provided by supervisors and training specialists, integrating new staff over a three-month period. This includes mandatory ongoing training for existing staff on updated standards, practices in Indigenous child welfare, and data management.
- 7. Addressing Training Coordination Needs:** The department will implement additional training coordinators to plan, deliver, and follow up on orientation and training, ensuring both departmental and individual needs are met.

Key Immediate Outcomes:

- **Stable Staffing Levels:** An increased number of permanent CSSWs and reduced reliance on temporary staffing.
- **Diverse and Local Workforce:** A significant increase in Inuit staff complement.
- **Competency Development:** More CSSWs achieving full competency requirements and being delegated under the CFSA.
- **Community Staffing Needs Met:** Ensuring CSSWs are available in communities.
- **Understanding Residential Care Costs:** Better comprehension of the costs incurred by other jurisdictions for residential care for better informed decision making.

Strategic Outputs / Deliverables:

- **Operational Review:** Conducting a review of operations to identify improvements.

- **Innovative CSSW Model with Comprehensive Onboarding:** Implementing a new CSSW model featuring in-depth onboarding and a gradual assumption of duties.
- **New Training Program for Staff and Supervisors:** Developing a comprehensive training program for staff and supervisors.
- **Expedited Recruitment Process:** Collaborating with the Department of Human Resources for faster recruitment.
- **Interjurisdictional Cost Review:** Conducting a review of residential care costs across jurisdictions.
- **Increased Housing and Office Space:** Collaborating with Community and Government Services and the Nunavut Housing Corporation to increase staff housing and office space.

In summary, this Priority addresses the recruitment and retention challenges in child welfare services. It focuses on developing a comprehensive human resources strategy to maintain a full, permanent staff, particularly of Nunavut Inuit. This includes tackling staffing issues, enhancing retention, and providing thorough orientation and training. The goal is to ensure stable staffing levels, a diverse local workforce, and competent staff, with immediate outcomes like increased permanent staff and better residential care cost understanding. Key deliverables include an operational review, innovative onboarding, improved recruitment processes, and expanded housing and office space. These efforts are crucial for sustaining an effective, culturally informed workforce in Nunavut's child welfare services.

Logic Model for the Department of Family Services' Family Wellness Strategic Framework, 2023-2028

Ultimate outcomesⁱ	Enhanced well-being of families, children, and communities in Nunavut.			Children live in safe and supportive families and communities.			The best interests, protection and well-being of children are met.	
Intermediate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children across Nunavut and those receiving care outside of the territory receive the protection from abuse, harm, and neglect that they are entitled to under the C&FS Act in a timely, equitable, and culturally appropriate manner. Children are supported within the context of their family and extended family to the extent possible. Each community plays a role in supporting and promoting the best interests of children and the well-being of families. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A child welfare and family support system that is accountable, continuously improving, Inuit-specific, and involves all of government and society. High quality and Inuit-specific programs and services are delivered to children, youth, and families. Risk factors contributing to child maltreatment are reduced/addressed. 				
Immediate outcome(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with Standards and Procedures, policies, and legislation. Improved human resource capacity with DFS and the Family Wellness Division. Enhanced training and increased staff skills and competencies. Work environment where employee health and safety are a priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in foster care receive the care and support they need. Foster parents, kinship caregivers and adoptive parents are prepared to foster children, are treated respectfully, engaged, and adequately supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children, youth and families have access to programs and services they need (such as prevention services and culturally specific programming). Improved communications and partnerships between DFS/FW, communities, and Inuit organizations. Increased resources available to communities across Nunavut. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases of suspected child harm/abuse are investigated according to standards. Increased awareness and implementation of the Nunavut Child Abuse and Neglect Response Agreement. Increased knowledge and confidence amongst CFS staff in conducting interviews/investigations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and their families receive the support they need. More complete and accessible client files. Better information management tool for frontline staff. Reliable data on clients and case management (generated through Matrix) to support monitoring, accountability and decision making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children cared for outside of Nunavut receive culturally competent care, ongoing connections with their families and communities, and safe, appropriate support and treatment. Assurance that group homes, foster care, and treatment agencies outside of the territory are meeting their service obligations. CSSW's and staff supporting clients OOT are supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of indeterminate CSSWs and less reliance on Casual Staffing actions. Increased Inuit and northern workforce. Increase in number of CSSWs who have obtained full competency requirements and are delegated under the CFSA. Communities will have CSSW's available. Better understanding of what costs other jurisdictions incur for residential care. 	
Outputs / Deliverablesⁱⁱ <i>Note: timelines for these outputs and deliverables will be included in the Action Plan.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, updated Standards and Procedures Manual and policies.ⁱⁱⁱ One Client – One Plan model for all DFS services. New Quality Assurance Program. Human resources recruitment and retention plan. Workplace Violence Strategy and Occupational Health and Safety Framework. New Critical Incident Debrief Process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New foster parent recruitment strategy. Enhanced training and support to all Nunavut foster caregivers (foster parents, kinship caregivers and adoptive parents). Expanded resources and services for parents and guardians to support reunification. Quarterly reporting on training of foster parents, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined access to mental wellness support for children, youth, and families through community traditional programming. Targeted community support programs including new prevention programs and culturally specific family support programs and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training CFS staff in interviewing skills. Compliance/quality reviews of investigation requirements and QA reports for senior management. New escalation reporting procedures manual for investigations which address timelines. and disciplinary actions where necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New case management information system (Matrix). Training on the matrix system. Compliance/quality reviews of case management standards and procedures with a particular focus on Individual Care Plans, Documentation and Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of the OOT Program with identification of the human resources and support needed to effectively deliver it. OOT standards that are clear and reflect leading practices within the Nunavut context. Up-to-date interprovincial placement agreements (IPPA) are in place for each child in OOT care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational review. New model of CSSW with in-depth onboarding and gradual assumption of duties. New training program for staff and supervisors. Expedited recruitment. IEP strategies Interjurisdictional review of costs for residential care. Increased staff housing and office space. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New clinical supervision model. Communications and change management strategies. New mechanisms for gathering feedback from clients and staff.^{iv} Renewed organizational structure and accountability framework with clear roles and responsibilities. New set of key performance indicators. New licensing and registration requirements for community social service workers. 	<p>support provided, and gaps in resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialized foster care caseloads in all regions. Up to date/reliable inventory of foster parents (fostering children, interested). Compliance/quality reviews of key foster care requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New prevention-focused social development funding program. Inventory of community programming available across communities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA reports for senior management. 	<p>with applicable provisions for courtesy supervision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance/quality reviews to monitor adherence to minimum contacts and case reviews for children and youth in OOT placements. New monitoring plan for the OOT Program. Status reports detailing reviews conducted, gaps identified and proposed resolution strategies. 	
Activities	<i>These activities will undergo development and finalization through consultation with stakeholders. Please refer to the "Actions for Consideration" section (Appendix I) for a suggested list of priorities.</i>						
Strategic Priorities	Organizational Excellence	Adoption, Foster care and Kinship Services	Inuit-specific Services	Investigations	Case Management	Out of territory (OOT) care	Recruitment and retention

Notes

¹ Ultimate outcomes (along with immediate and intermediate outcomes) are derived from the Strategic Framework and the *Nunavut Child and Family Services Act* Preamble and Principles.

¹ Outputs and deliverables are based on the actions presented in the Strategic Framework.

¹ As per this framework, the updated manual would also reflect IQ and leading practices. The Strategic Framework also includes commitments to develop updated policies and procedures on:

- the Local Contract Authority (LCA) purchase approval process
- transition planning (i.e., urgent- and non-urgent placement changes of a child in the care of the Director, requirements to consult and obtain consent from parents or legal guardians when a child is placed outside of the parental home under a Voluntary Service Agreement and there is a need to change their placement, prior to the move)
- Foster care
- Investigations
- Case management (including areas such as contact standards, plans of care, incident reporting, permanency planning/plans, and the use of Structured Decision-Making Assessment Tools)
- Out-of-territory care

¹ This includes engagement with and feedback from staff (including Client Liaison Officers) on challenges and opportunities related to investigations, case management and out of territory care.

¹ Training actions include enhanced onboarding, enhanced cultural-awareness training, training specifically for supervisors on their roles and responsibilities, and providing ongoing training and professional development opportunities.

Monitoring Progress and Measuring Impact

The Strategic Framework aims to improve the delivery of services to children, youth, and families of Nunavut. To achieve this, the plan outlines strategies that will be monitored and evaluated to ensure that they are effective in improving the lives of children, youth, and families. The monitoring and evaluation plan will define clear and realistic indicators of success based on available data, the audit cycle, and the time frame for change.

Different levels of performance indicators will be used to track progress towards short, medium, and long-term outcomes. In the short term, the focus will be on ensuring clear and concise standards of practice and measuring compliance with adherence to these standards. This will translate into equitable access to services, consistent practice, and evidence-based intervention to help support families in a culturally informed way.

The implementation plan will include a comprehensive set of system performance indicators. These will critically assess if the Child and Family Services System is achieving its objectives in offering enhanced support to children, youth, and families.

Key Monitoring and Data Collection Areas:

- Metrics for caseload and workload management.
- Rates of staff vacancies.
- Direct feedback from staff.
- Number and effectiveness of staff training programs.
- User feedback from services and community input.
- Adherence levels to essential practice standards.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- A significant increase in children and youth supported within their family home or community.
- A reduction in referrals to Out of Territory Resource Services.
- A stronger emphasis on supportive/preventive services and early intervention.
- A rise in the number of kinship care providers.
- Lower turnover and vacancy rates among child and family services frontline staff.
- A decrease in the number of children entering the care of the Director.

Regular reporting on these deliverables will be ensured through well-defined dissemination processes, facilitating transparency and continuous improvement in service delivery.

Transformative Roadmap: Strengthening Child and Family Services Through Strategic Change Management

The Family Wellness Strategic Framework's implementation marks a significant transition for the Department of Family Services (DFS). This plan, grounded in comprehensive assessment and planning, addresses the readiness for change and evaluates the current state of the child and family system, focusing on policies, procedures, practice standards, and workforce capacity. Recent examinations have identified crucial capacity limitations, guiding us towards tailored interventions to enhance outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Key Elements of the Change Management Framework:

- 1. DFS Structure Review and Leadership Enhancements:** In our commitment to excellence and innovation, we are conducting a comprehensive review of the Department of Family Services (DFS) structure. This strategic evaluation is focused on optimizing operational efficiency and significantly enhancing our leadership capabilities.
- 2. Milestones and Metrics Development:** Performance indicators are being established to monitor the plan's progress and effectiveness. These indicators will serve as benchmarks to gauge success and identify areas needing improvement.
- 3. Readiness Assessment:** A comprehensive analysis of existing processes and engagement with stakeholders, including frontline workers, community leaders, and families, has been integral to the strategic plan. This assessment is an ongoing process that will continue to inform the development of the detailed implementation map.
- 4. Detailed Implementation Map:** An implementation (action) plan with specific goals, milestones, and phases of implementation will be developed in consultation with stakeholders. This map will ensure a systematic and well-managed rollout of the strategic initiatives.
- 5. Change Management:** A critical aspect of the initiative involves preparing, equipping, and supporting individuals to adopt and integrate changes into their daily operations smoothly.
- 6. Comprehensive Communication Strategy:** The DFS acknowledges the need to develop a comprehensive communications plan to support the success of the Family Wellness Strategic Framework. The communications plan will be informed by the Guiding Principles outlined in the Plan and will also support the seven strategic priorities through a comprehensive work plan outlining the communications tools and tactics necessary to ensure the success of the Strategic Plan. It is also intended to ensure clear, consistent messages about our vision and strategic directions, utilizing various channels for dissemination and stakeholder feedback.

7. **Leadership Alignment and Employee Involvement:** Leadership and staff engagement are crucial. Leaders will act as change champions, and employee forums will capture diverse perspectives, fostering ownership and commitment to the plan.
8. **Capacity Building:** Emphasizing orientations, training, and development, this aspect of the plan includes a dedicated project management structure for tracking progress and public reporting.

Upcoming Initiatives:

- **New Strategic Initiatives:** The Department is working on several new initiatives that will further strengthen the child and family service system. These initiatives will be aligned with the strategic objectives and will focus on areas such as improving service delivery, enhancing staff training, and increasing community engagement.
- **Public Reporting and Accountability:** Regular progress reports will be made available ensuring transparency and accountability in the implementation of the strategic plan.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback:** Ongoing engagement with stakeholders will continue, with a focus on gathering feedback and insights to refine and adjust the plan as needed.

The change management framework within the Family Wellness Strategic Framework is designed to be dynamic, responsive, and adaptable, ensuring that the evolving needs of children, families, and the community are met effectively. This plan signifies a commitment to continuous improvement and excellence in service delivery.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN: DEVELOPMENT, ENGAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Nunavut families face significant challenges, necessitating a return to a community-based approach to child welfare. Recognizing that child safety is everyone's responsibility, the Department of Family Services (DFS) champions Innuinguiniq – the collective raising of our children. This philosophy underscores the importance of supporting families in times of need and safeguarding children's well-being together, guiding our path forward.

Central to our efforts is an Inuit-led and Inuit-informed approach, with the Guiding Principles serving as our foundation for developing and implementing the Family Wellness Strategic Action Plan. These principles ensure the delivery of high-quality, Inuit-specific services for children, youth, and families. DFS has initiated a phased engagement strategy, focusing initially on internal collaboration within the department and with the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). In Phase I, extensive internal engagement with the Family Wellness team and executive identified gaps, priorities, and activities to address challenges and understand existing barriers. This inclusive process involved participation from front-line staff and management across all regions within the Family Wellness division.

Outcomes included the identification of operational gaps and priorities, alongside a comprehensive SWOT analysis informing the strategic planning process and efforts to address current challenges. Feedback from the OAG and interactions with executive and leadership committees within the Government of Nunavut further enriched our understanding and informed our approach. Phase II will prioritize extensive consultation and collaboration with Inuit organizations, the Representative for Children and Youth Office (RCYO) and committed stakeholders.

Building upon the established strategic framework, DFS will now develop a comprehensive strategic plan. Collaborative engagement with key stakeholders will identify priority areas, strategic initiatives, and performance metrics, guiding plan implementation. Inuit Societal Values will underpin conversations and decisions, fostering meaningful engagement and ensuring alignment with community needs. This transition involves translating the broad principles and objectives outlined in the strategic framework into actionable goals, strategies, and tactics. Additionally, the strategic plan will outline the allocation of resources, timelines, responsibilities, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure accountability and track progress towards achieving the defined strategic goals. By leveraging the insights gained from the strategic framework and engaging stakeholders in the strategic planning process, the department aims to develop a robust and adaptive strategic plan that will guide its actions and decisions in pursuit of its overarching goals and objectives.

The department has initiated the formulation of a set of initial actions outlined in Appendix I, which will undergo further deliberation with our internal and external stakeholders for refinement. As part of this collaborative consultative process, DFS will lead or co-lead working groups on specific actions. Groups will be comprised of individuals with relevant knowledge, expertise, and representation from inside the Government of Nunavut and partners, non-profit organizations, Inuit Organizations and community agencies as needed. Working groups will develop and oversee workplans that include specific actions, assigned responsibilities, milestones, and performance targets. Regular reporting to the DFS Executive Management Committee, the Nunavut Legislative Assembly and the public is expected. DFS will continue to work with the Office of the Auditor General of Canada on progress to

address the audit recommendations.

To support the consultation process and action plan communication, the department has crafted a comprehensive communication strategy and engagement plan, including a detailed stakeholder list. Close collaboration with the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs (EIA) will provide guidance and support as we initiate engagements and meticulously craft the strategic plan. Our commitment is to present a Strategic Action Plan ready for implementation in Spring 2024. While recognizing that finding solutions requires time and dedication, DFS is fully committed to nurturing relationships and fostering partnerships to ensure lasting success in our endeavors.

STEPPING FORWARD

Embarking on a journey of this magnitude may initially seem overwhelming, especially considering the significance of the outcomes we aim to achieve. However, despite the challenges ahead, the path forward is illuminated by clarity. The Department of Family Services (DFS) will lean heavily on the guiding principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit to navigate our contributions, ensuring that our response is intricately woven through the lens of Inuit culture.

Inuit social teachings and childrearing practices were directed at views of the future. The development of a good human being was central to this focus. Honing skills that demonstrated excellence in one's area of expertise and enabled each person to provide for others was a core goal in the lives of all Inuit. The ability to improve on something and to make life easier for those around you, as a result, was considered high achievement.²⁰

Navigating this path forward will undoubtedly present obstacles and challenges, requiring us to employ creative problem-solving skills and maintain a resilient spirit. This journey will be a collective learning experience for all involved, as we navigate the complexities together. Drawing from the foundational values of Inuuqatigiitsiarniq (respect and relationship-building), Piliriqatigiinniq/Ikajuqtiigiinniq (working collectively), Qanuqtuurniq (innovation and resourcefulness), and Pijitsirniq (service to the families and communities of Nunavut), we are poised to overcome hurdles and forge ahead with determination and purpose.

²⁰ Nunavut Department of Education, 2007, p. 29

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Appendix 1

Family Wellness Strategic Plan – Proposed Actions for Consideration and Consultation

Priority 1: Organizational Excellence					
Strategic Direction	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome	Indicator of Success
Organizational excellence	1.1 Complete the review and updates to the Child and Family Services (CFS) Standards and Procedures Manual.	Department of Family Services			
	1.2 Amend the CFS Standards and Procedures Manual to include clear timelines for the Local Contract Authority (LCA) purchase approval process.	Department of Family Services			
	1.3 Develop a set of key indicators to collect and track data that will help determine whether the CFS System is meeting its goals and better supporting children and families.	Department of Family Services			
	1.4 Explore accreditation/ association opportunities for Community Social Services Workers and consider membership in a professional association for social workers.	Department of Family Services			
	1.5 Design the One Client – One Plan model for all DFS services.	Department of Family Services			
	1.6 Launch a formal Quality Assurance Program for all aspects of service delivery.	Department of Family Services			
	1.7 Create and enforce a policy defining eligibility for LCA support. Develop a Directive outlining the LCA purchase approval process for staff awareness during the policy and procedure development.	Department of Family Services			

	1.8 Transition Planning: Develop and implement a policy and procedure that requires a transition plan be developed and implemented prior to any non-urgent placement changes of a child in the care of the Director.	Department of Family Services			
	1.9 Transition Planning: Develop and implement policy and procedures that outline what constitutes an urgent placement change for a child in the care of the Director.	Department of Family Services			
Human Resource Planning	1.10 Improve the human resource capacity to meet the needs of children, youth and families accessing services under the Child and Family Services Act by filling current and new vacancies.	In partnership with stakeholders			
	1.11 Develop and implement a comprehensive human resources recruitment and retention plan.	Department of Family Services			
	1.12 Conduct ongoing assessments of CFS' optimal team design and skill mix, workload, workflow, and caseloads.	Department of Family Services			
	1.13 As part of the annual main estimates perform ongoing assessments of the financial and human resources needed to deliver CFS.	Department of Family Services			
	1.14 Complete and implement the Workplace Violence Strategy and an Occupational Health and Safety Framework.	Department of Family Services			
	1.15 Develop a Critical Incident Debrief Process.	Department of Family Services			
	1.16 Refining our organizational structure and systems to be more responsive to current activities and to future opportunities.	Department of Family Services			
Invest in our People	1.17 Develop and implement a phased training framework.	Department of Family Services			

	1.18 Implement a clinical supervision model, and support supervisors and managers through training on their legislative responsibility and the accompanying policies, standards, protocols, and procedures.	Department of Family Services			
	1.19 Meet with current and incoming Directors to identify their individual training and professional development needs.	Department of Family Services			
	1.20 Provide professional development and career development opportunities to our CSSW and other employees.	Department of Family Services			
	1.21 Compilation of materials to support the onboarding of all new staff and ongoing training of current staff.	Department of Family Services			
Partnerships and Engagement	1.22 Continue working with the Katujjiqatigiinniq Child Welfare Working Group to address Child and Family Services priorities.	In partnership with stakeholders			
	1.23 Continue working with OAG, providing progress updates, barriers and gaps.	Department of Family Services			
	1.24. Continue working with Public Health Agency of Canada improving data collection and change management as it relates to use of Matrix.	Department of Family Services			
	1.25 Finalize and Implement the Family Services Communications Strategy as well as the Communications Plan to support this FW Strategic Plan.	Department of Family Services			
	1.26 Develop processes to engage and receive feedback from children, youth and families to help improve the system and services.	Department of Family Services			

	1.27 Ensure there are mechanisms in place after training events to capture CFS Staff feedback to inform programs, services, and policies.	Department of Family Services			
	1.28 Engagement and representation on Federal/Provincial/Territorial committees	Department of Family Services			
	1.29 Working with the Department of Health and other GN departments to strengthen interagency meetings and for a more coordinated approach to the delivery of family services.	In partnership with stakeholders			
	1.30 Transition planning: Develop and implement uniform policies and procedures that outline the requirements to consult and obtain consent from parents or legal guardians when a child is placed outside of the parental home under a Voluntary Service Agreement.	Department of Family Services			
Quality Assurance	1.31 Implement a monitoring framework to ensure compliance and adherence to policies, procedures, and legislation.	Department of Family Services			
	1.32 Develop and implement an accountability framework to clarify accountability, roles, and responsibilities. Communicate changes to all Staff.	Department of Family Services			
	1.33 Recruit a Territorial Quality Assurance Manager to implement a quality assurance framework for the division of FW.	Department of Family Services			

Priority 2: Adoption, Foster care and Kinship Services

Strategic Directions	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome	Indicator of Success
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Organizational excellence	2.1 Conduct quality reviews to monitor compliance with key foster care requirements.	Department of Family Services			
	2.2 Complete a comprehensive update to Foster Care Standards and Procedures to reflect leading practices.	Department of Family Services			
	2.3 Provide equitable support for foster children that build on their resilience, personal interests, and strengths.	Department of Family Services			
Human Resource Planning	2.4 Creating specialized foster care caseloads in all regions.	Department of Family Services			
Partnerships and Engagement	2.5 Develop a foster parent recruitment strategy and plan, including an awareness campaign promoting the need and benefit of being a foster parent.	Department of Family Services			
	2.6 Provide enhanced training and support to all Nunavut foster caregivers.	Department of Family Services			
	2.7 Expanding parents and guardians' resources and services to support reunification.	Department of Family Services			
Quality Assurance	2.8 Quarterly reporting to ADM providing updates on training of foster parents, support provided, and gaps in resources.	Department of Family Services			

Priority 3: Inuit Specific Services

Strategic Directions	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome	Indicator of Success
Organizational excellence	3.1 Continue to work with the Department of Health to streamline access to mental wellness support for children, youth and families through community traditional programming. (carving, sewing, land-	Department of Family Services			

	programs, traditional cooking) and on-the-land healing programs.				
	3.2 Continue delivering targeted community support programs.	Department of Family Services			
	3.3 Create and pilot child wellness prevention programs, family prevention programs, based on community needs and promising practices and that aims to strengthening partnerships with community resources.	Department of Family Services			
	3.4 Develop family support services including on-the-land and country food access, parenting programs, parent support groups, parent-child activities, etc.	Department of Family Services			
	3.5 Establish a FW prevention-focused social development funding program to build and strengthen community-based programming	Department of Family Services			
Human Resource Planning	3.6 Ensure that all new staff of the department and territory go through cultural training and receive adequate onboarding.	Department of Family Services			
Partnerships and Engagement	3.7 Provide orientation to Indigenous community leadership bodies on the CFS program.	Department of Family Services			
	3.8 Improve communication and partnerships with Inuit communities to support and care for children and families in their communities. A communications plan is being developed and implemented to support the Strategic Plan. All communications and strategies being developed are informed by Inuit Societal Values.	Department of Family Services			
	3.9 Explore options for community agreements with those communities that indicate an interest in considering an increased role in supporting families involved in the CFS system.	Department of Family Services			
	3.10 Ensure all staff and community partners are aware of the funding opportunities. Develop and implement an awareness campaign.	Department of Family Services			

	3.11 Community development through accessibility of social advocacy funding.	Department of Family Services			
Quality Assurance	3.12 Assessment of culturally relevant programming within community.	Department of Family Services			

Priority 4: Investigations

Strategic Directions	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome	Indicator of Success
Organizational excellence	4.1 Conduct quality reviews to monitor compliance with key investigation requirements. Conduct follow-up regional meetings to discuss results and determine strategies to improve compliance.	Department of Family Services			
	4.2 Complete a comprehensive update to the investigation section of the CFS Standards and Procedures Manual to integrate leading practices, forensic interviewing techniques, and Structured Decision-Making Assessment Tools	Department of Family Services			
	4.3 Update the Children and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual to include when and how referrals are to be made to the Umingmak Centre. Develop a referral form to be included in the manual as reference.	Department of Family Services			
	4.4 Update the Children and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual to include reference to the Nunavut Child Abuse and Neglect Response Agreement and a copy of the agreement should be included in the manual for staff to reference.	Department of Family Services			
	4.5 Ensure current process is followed when a case involves multiple communities and or jurisdictions.	Department of Family Services			

Invest in our People	4.6 Provide ongoing opportunities for training to CFS staff in interviewing skills.	Department of Family Services			
	4.7 Train new and existing Staff on the Nunavut Child Abuse and Neglect Response Agreement in collaboration with the RCMP where appropriate.	Department of Family Services			
	4.8 Train all supervisors and managers on their roles and responsibilities as they relate to ensuring that policies, procedures, and legislation are followed.	Department of Family Services			
Partnerships and Engagement	4.9 Engage staff to better understand the challenges and opportunities in meeting key standards on interviews and investigations. Develop a robust feedback survey dedicated to this.	Department of Family Services			
	4.10 Work with the Department of Education in addressing situations of child abuse or neglect and the sharing of information related to the care and well-being of children at risk	Department of Family Services			
Quality Assurance	4.11 Develop an escalation reporting procedures manual for investigations which address timelines. and disciplinary actions where necessary.	Department of Family Services			

Priority 5: Case Management

Strategic Directions	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome	Indicator of Success
Organizational excellence	5.1 Conduct quality reviews on children and youth who are in the Director's temporary and permanent care.	Department of Family Services			

	5.2 Conduct compliance audits on CSSW files with a particular focus on Individual Care Plans, Documentation and Services.	Department of Family Services			
	5.3 Update contact standards to reflect leading practices.	Department of Family Services			
	5.4 Roll out and Implement Matrix Case Management in FW	Department of Family Services			
	5.5 Using the FW Planning Committee, ensure that permanency plans are jointly developed by each child's family and community (MCDF Fall Report, pg.25, 2023)	Department of Family Services			
	5.6 Complete a comprehensive update to the plan of care agreement section of the CFS Standards and Procedures Manual to reflect leading practices and Structured Decision-Making Assessment Tools	Department of Family Services			
	5.7 Update incident reporting standards to reflect new accountability structure and leading practices.	Department of Family Services			
Invest in our People	5.8 Provide training to current and new staff on Matrix.	Department of Family Services			
Partnerships and Engagement	5.9 Engage staff to better understand the challenges and opportunities related to case management. Develop a staff survey specifically to follow up at the three- and six-month periods after Matrix is implemented.	Department of Family Services			
Quality Assurance	5.10 Reports to the ADM detailing reviews conducted, gaps identified, and proposed resolution strategies.	Department of Family Services			
	5.11 Develop quality assurance processes using Matrix.	Department of Family Services			
	5.12 Review of culturally based childcare plans focused on permanency.	Department of Family Services			
	5.13 Monitoring staff training.	Department of Family Services			

Priority 6: Support for OOT clients

Strategic Directions	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome	Indicator of Success
Organizational excellence	6.1 Conduct a review of children in Out-of-Territory (OOT) Specialized Services to ensure a current interprovincial placement agreement (IPPA) for each child is in place with applicable provisions for courtesy supervision.	Department of Family Services			
	6.2 Conduct quality reviews to monitor adherence to minimum contacts and case reviews for children and youth in OOT placements.	Department of Family Services			
	6.3 Develop a monitoring plan for the OOT Program.	Department of Family Services			
	6.4 Revise key OOT standards to reflect the program's objective.	Department of Family Services			
	6.5 Update the RFP for Residential Placement Contracts to require evidence of licensing status.	Department of Family Services			
Human Resource Planning	6.6 Review the OOT Program and determine the required human resources to effectively deliver it.	Department of Family Services			
Investing in Our People	6.7 Create an educational training program on out of territory placements as part of the employee orientation program.	Department of Family Services			
Partnerships and Engagement	6.8 Engage with the Client Liaison Officer positions in Yellowknife, Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Ottawa to better understand the challenges and opportunities related to OOT care.	Department of Family Services			
Quality Assurance	6.9 Develop status reports detailing reviews conducted, gaps identified and proposed resolution strategies.	Department of Family Services			

7. Recruitment and Retention

Strategic Directions	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome	Indicator of Success
Organizational excellence	7.1 Conduct an operational review.	Department of Family Services			
Human Resource Planning	7.2 Working with the Department of Human Resources, expedite the recruitment and onboarding of 27 CSSW positions in the highest need communities.	Department of Family Services			
	7.3 Implement IEP strategies to grow the Inuit and northern workforce within FW at all levels of the organizations.	Department of Family Services			
	7.4 Engage with Nunavut Arctic College to expand the Social Work program and create a pathway for internship and priority hiring of graduates.	Department of Family Services			
	7.5 Conduct an interjurisdictional review of costs for residential care.	Department of Family Services			
	7.6 Create a new model of CSSW in-depth onboarding and gradual assumption of duties.	Department of Family Services			
Invest in our People	7.7 Create a new model of CSSW in-depth onboarding and gradual assumption of duties.	Department of Family Services			
	7.8 Update the core training and ensure delivery consistently in all regions.	Department of Family Services			
	7.9 Provide ongoing cultural safety training to staff.	Department of Family Services			

	7.10 Professional development opportunities for existing staff to continue to learn and grow in their roles.	Department of Family Services			
	7.11 Identify gaps in training materials and develop standard materials to meet these needs.	Department of Family Services			
Partnerships and Engagement	7.12 Working with Nunavut Housing Corporation and Community and Government Services to ensure housing and office space are allocated efficiently and using modular units.	In partnership with stakeholders			
	7.13 Raise awareness and promote the importance of social workers in every community by sensitization programs and community engagement sessions. Developing a communications plan / awareness campaign to support this action.	Department of Family Services			
	7.14 Develop a practice of regular communication across all levels of the department.	Department of Family Services			
	7.15 Create a confidential means for staff to communicate challenges and engage in problem solving with managers and supervisors.	Department of Family Services			

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