

CHILD WELFARE BUSINESS PLAN

2024-2025

INTRODUCTION

This document represents the 2024-2025 Business Plan for Child Welfare services at Jewish Family and Child Service of Greater Toronto (JF&CS). It highlights the mandate, strategic priorities, key activities and performance indicators of the organization related to Child Welfare service for the previous year. The plan also demonstrates how JF&CS continues to strengthen community partnerships and deliver child welfare services in Toronto and York Region.

The events of October 7, 2023 followed by a significant escalation in the Israel-Hamas conflict has led to an alarming rise in antisemitism in the diaspora including here in Ontario. There has been a noticeable increase in hate crimes including vandalism of Jewish institutions, verbal harassment, online hate speech and protests targeting the Jewish community. This surge in antisemitism has created an atmosphere of fear, anxiety and insecurity within the Jewish community. Particular concern is apparent for Jewish children and youth who face antisemitism in their schools and social circles often confronted with pressure to denounce or conceal their Jewish history and faith. While community leaders have called for stronger measures to address this growing problem, it continues to have an impact on the agency's clients and staff. The value of JF&CS as the Jewish Children's Aid Society given the current climate has become more important than ever.

MANDATE OF CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES

Children's Aid Societies (CASs) in Ontario are independently governed agencies that are responsible for providing services to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children. CASs have been providing these services to communities across Ontario for over 100 years. CASs are legislated to perform certain functions under the provisions of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA). The mandate of CASs, as described in Section 35 of the CYFSA, includes the following functions:

- Investigate allegations or evidence that children may be in need of protection;
- Protect children where necessary;
- Provide guidance, counselling and other services to families for protecting children or for the prevention of circumstances requiring the protection of children;
- Provide care for children assigned or committed to its care under this Act;
- Supervise children assigned to its supervision under this Act;
- Place children for adoption;
- Perform any other duties given to it by this Act or the Regulations or any other Act.

This legislation and the supporting regulations, directives and standards prescribe specific and detailed requirements for what services CASs must provide and how they must provide them, including services to Indigenous children and families and French language services, as well as the timelines in which these services must be provided.

CASs provide critical services which help to provide safety to the most vulnerable members of our society; children and youth who have experienced or are at risk of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, neglect or abandonment. CASs have the authority and are mandated to intervene if a caregiver cannot safely care for a child.

The vast majority of children and youth who receive service from CASs live with their families. This family based support is provided through intensive assessments and service plans, contacts with numerous other professionals and service providers, as well as ongoing supervision and support of children while they remain in their family home. Providing supports to children while they reside in their homes is consistent with government policy directives and the legislative mandate which requires CASs to take the least intrusive course of action which is adequate to protect the child. This past year at JF&CS more than 98% of children and youth who received service remain living with their families.

Child welfare practice is quite complex and as such the work must be performed by skilled, qualified child welfare staff who participate in a rigorous authorization process provided by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) along with other required ongoing training.

JF&CS VISION STATEMENT

A resilient, inclusive community where individuals and families thrive – empowered by hope, dignity and compassion.

JF&CS MISSION STATEMENT

JF&CS is a multi-service agency that strengthens and supports individuals, children, families, serving the Jewish community and all others who seek support.

PILLARS OF IMPACT

- ***Safety and Security***
- ***Mental Health and Wellness***
- ***Poverty Reduction***

JF&CS ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

- ✓ Mutual Accountability
- ✓ Trust & Collaboration
- ✓ Learning & Renewal Care
- ✓ Resilience, Inclusion & Diversity
- ✓ Adaptation, Innovation and Creativity

JF&CS STRATEGIC FOCUS

The mission of JF&CS is to support the healthy development of individuals, children, families and communities through prevention, protection, counselling, education and advocacy services, within the context of Jewish values. This focus rests on a strategic model of client-centered service delivery, an evidence informed model that emphasizes seamless service delivery and effective communication among all areas of the agency so that services are wrapped around the ongoing needs of the client. Agency services and supports are viewed as integrated solutions that are brought together using a comprehensive case management approach in order to support three key strategic pillars of impact:

1. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Services and supports designed to increase safety and security are provided to individuals and families in need of immediate intervention and support due to abuse and/or neglect. Most typically, this includes Jewish children and youth experiencing abuse and/or neglect, as well as any women (not only Jewish) experiencing physical, sexual, and/or psychological abuse by their spouse or partner. With a goal of Increasing Safety and Security, children and youth are supported through JF&CS's Child Welfare Services in its capacity as a mandated CAS and women are supported through our comprehensive array of woman abuse (VAW) services. Over the next year, JF&CS will be expanding its Family Violence Program to provide trauma-informed services to all family members impacted by family violence, including men, women and children.

2. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

As a multi-service agency, JF&CS is committed to delivering programs, services, and supports to improve the mental health and wellness of its clients, with a strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention. A broad range of client needs and issues are addressed, including stress, depression and anxiety, children's mental health, Chaplaincy needs, palliative care needs, parenting and marital issues, bereavement, separation and divorce, and social isolation.

3. POVERTY REDUCTION

Poverty is both predictive of and the result of numerous psycho-social challenges including stress, depression, serious mental health issues, substance abuse, poor physical health, unstable housing, reduced educational access, and social isolation. Through the support of the Jewish community and United Jewish Appeal Federation of Greater Toronto (UJA), and other community funders and donors JF&CS offers an array of services aimed at reducing the negative effects of poverty on the most vulnerable members of the community.,

These three priority areas overlap conceptually and in practice. JF&CS client-centered model of service delivery seeks to ensure that all client needs are supported through the wide array of services and supports that are available across the agency. A significant strength of JF&CS is its multi-service structure, which allows the agency to respond to multiple client needs and issues without the need for external referrals. When referrals are needed, our Centralized Intake Department has a comprehensive and up to date understanding of the community resources available to our clients. JF&CS also has partnerships with several community-based agencies in order to coordinate the provision of service. For example, JF&CS clients in need of employment support have regular access to the services of two employment counsellors through Jewish Vocational Service of Metropolitan Toronto (JVS).

JF&CS STRATEGIC PLAN (2025-2030)

In 2025, JF&CS launched a Strategic Plan that will be in effect until the 2030. This plan is centered on four (4) key strategic directions:

1. STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO PREPARE FOR FUTURE GROWTH

- Enhance technological capacity & competencies
- Cultivate a positive, inclusive & engaging workplace environment, both physical & cultural
- Build a diverse talent & leadership pipeline, including staff & volunteers

2. CLEARLY COMMUNICATE AGENCY MANDATE & ACTIVELY PROMOTE DEPTH OF SERVICES, BOTH INTERNALLY & EXTERNALLY

- Effectively position JF&CS to reflect focus & differentiate us from other social service agencies.
- Ensure alignment, understanding & communication of JF&CS mandate amongst all internal & external stakeholders.
- Increase awareness & understanding of JF&CS, & tailor communication to key stakeholders & the broader community

3. EVOLVE SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

- Ensure new programs & services are informed by the diversity of voices in our communities
- Better meet community needs through service evolution
- Develop partnerships & collaborations with existing & emerging communities & organizations

4. ENHANCE THE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION

- Update & standardize financial processes & systems for more effective allocation of resources
- Explore opportunities to expand revenue streams
- Develop analysis of funding risks, mitigation strategies & contingency plans
- Empower agency departmental leads to have financial accountability

JF&CS STRATEGIC PLAN '25-'30

JF&CS
JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILD
SERVICE OF GREATER TORONTO



VISION

A resilient, inclusive community where individuals and families thrive – empowered by hope, dignity and compassion.

MISSION

Jewish Family and Child Service is a multi-service agency that strengthens and supports individuals, children and families, serving the Jewish community and all others who seek support.

PILLARS OF IMPACT



Strategic Directions

- 1** Strengthen organizational culture and infrastructure to prepare for future growth.
- 2** Clearly communicate agency mandate and actively promote breadth & depth of services, both internally and externally.
- 3** Evolve services and partnerships to address changing needs of the communities we serve.
- 4** Enhance financial sustainability of organization.

Organizational Values



Funders and
Accreditations:



Funded by:
Federal Ministry of Finance
on behalf of Ministry of the Budget

SERVICE PHILOSOPHY AND OVERVIEW OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICE AT JF&CS

For over 40 years, JF&CS has provided child welfare services to the Jewish community of Toronto and York Region. Child protection services are governed by the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, along with related regulations and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS).

At JF&CS, our child welfare services are fully integrated with our poverty reduction and child and adult mental health services. This includes individual, couples and group counselling, educational and financial assistance programs, woman abuse programs, youth preparation for independence programs, and a full spectrum of cultural, religious and social programs serving the most vulnerable within the Jewish community.

Staff in the child welfare department collaborate with schools, summer camps, community groups, police departments, mental health organizations, other Children's Aid Societies, and other service providers who work with children, youth and families who are at risk of child abuse and neglect. Frequent contact with these agencies and organizations has resulted in JF&CS being used as a training and consultation resource for how best to respond to child abuse, neglect and domestic violence, as well provide support to transitional aged youth. Close and frequent contact with our community partners allows the agency to understand gaps in service and implement plans to address them. Over the years, this has resulted in various agency responses and innovations, from working in schools to introducing and growing Russian and Hebrew-speaking worker programs as well as partnerships within the Orthodox community. A case example will illustrate how the integration of multiple services is benefitting the agency's clients.

Note: The names and details of the case have been altered in order to protect anonymity of our clients.

Case A

A community referral was made to the child welfare department regarding Mark a 15 year old boy living with his three younger siblings and parents. Concerns were raised because Mark was not attending school regularly and his parents were struggling to manage what they described as very challenging behaviours. They were particularly worried as Mark had begun using marijuana and alcohol and he was experiencing difficulties with peers at school. Despite their efforts to make better choices Mark often resisted their guidance. Tensions escalated at home and during a moment of frustration, Mark and his father were involved in a physical altercation.

During the assessment, the child protection worker gained insight into the family's stressors and the circumstances that contributed to the incident. The parents openly acknowledged their need for support, and they attended parenting and counselling services at JF&CS. In addition, the family received assistance from one of the agency's Financial Empowerment workers that provided them with needed financial help. The family also received a camp subsidy which contributed to the three children having a memorable summer camp experience.

To further support Mark and reduce the family's stresses, the worker accompanied the family to school meetings to ensure Mark had access to the appropriate resources for his academic and social success. The worker also facilitated meetings with relatives and friends, strengthening the family's support network and reinforcing connections to both extended family and professionals. The case was closed as the family

felt well supported. The child welfare team built trust with the family, who now feel comfortable reaching out to call JF&CS for help if needed in the future.

LEGISLATION UPDATES

On June 6, 2024, Bill 188, Supporting Children's Futures Act, received Royal Assent. This Bill amends the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA), and makes various other related amendments to several other Acts. The purpose of these amendments is to improve the safety, well-being and privacy of children and youth in care and other licensed out-of-home care settings. Changes to the CYFSA include strengthening the Ministry's oversight of foster care and group homes, including strong enforcement tools to hold placements accountable to high standards, enhancing privacy protections for individuals who currently or were formerly in the child welfare system, and ensuring children and youth are provided information about the Ombudsman and how to contact their office should they wish to file a complaint about the care they receive.

In January 2025, provisions came into force that imposed further restrictions on discipline practices for foster parents and staff that work in group home settings. Additionally, more robust police check were required for individuals who work with vulnerable children or youth, including kin, foster and adoption caregivers. The Chief Executive Officers and Board Directors of child welfare agencies also now require these enhanced Broader Record Checks.

Further amendments to the CYFSA came into effect on July 1, 2025 that seek to enhance the oversight of out of home care settings, which includes licensing enforcement mechanisms and tools such as administrative penalties. Specific details regarding the operationalizing of administrative penalties are now subject to a public consultation process.

In the coming year, the government will be looking to introduce legislative and regulatory provisions to ensure even more accountability of service providers. Bill 33, Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025 has reached a second reading in the legislature and proposes changes to how Children's Aid Societies review, update and make public their by-laws. It also proposes a new section of the CYFSA to require Children's Aid Societies to obtain Minister's approval for certain financial transactions.

CHILD WELFARE REDESIGN

In July 2020, the Ontario government announced its strategy to redesign the child welfare system by focusing directly on the needs of children and youth to create solid foundations to support strong families. The redesign focuses on enhancing community-based prevention services so that services are high quality, culturally appropriate and truly responsive to the needs of children, youth and families. More emphasis is placed on ensuring that all community sectors understand the importance of supporting families and working together to address the various challenges families face. Redesign addresses systemic issues within and across sectors serving vulnerable children and families. Priority focus areas for child welfare include family-based care settings, improving the overall quality of care for children and youth, and supporting societies to balance their budgets.

The five (5) pillars guiding the redesign are focused on prevention, early intervention and seeking more permanent homes for children and youth in the child welfare system include:

1. Child, youth, family and community wellbeing
2. Quality of care
3. Strengthening youth supports
4. Improving stability and permanency
5. System accountability and sustainability

A number of redesign initiatives are underway:

Ready Set Go (RSG):

Youth exiting the child welfare system typically experience poorer outcomes compared to the general Canadian youth population. Many youth who have grown up in the care of the child welfare system often do not have a stable home environment and/or strong relationships with supportive peers and adults. Research shows that these youth are more likely to experience a range of complex challenges, such as homelessness, mental health concerns, unemployment, lack of educational achievement and involvement in the justice system.

On April 1, 2023 the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) introduced a new program called Ready, Set, Go (RSG) to provide support for youth who have been in the care of a children's aid society. Under the RSG program, children's aid societies emphasize helping children and youth in care plan to for their future at an earlier age. Starting at age 13, youth in care now begin to learn more practical life skills and make concrete educational goals. At age 15, the emphasis expands to financial literacy and preparing youth for the workforce, including managing personal finances, setting up a bank account, grocery shopping, resume building, and how to access social services and other supports.

The RSG program allows youth who were receiving services at a children's aid society (either through a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement [VYSA] or through Extended Society Care, to continue to receive support until they are 23 years old. The age was previously set at 21. The monthly financial support has also been increased in order to provide youth with a better quality of life and safer housing opportunities, thus enabling them to focus more on their studies and/or their jobs.

Quality Standards Framework (QSF):

On July 1, 2023, new regulatory amendments to support the implementation of the Quality Standards Framework: A Resource Guide to Improve the Quality of Care for Children and Young Persons in Licensed Residential Settings were passed. These new Quality Standards Framework (QSF) regulations seek to improve the quality of care children and youth in the care of a children's aid society receive.

Some highlights from the QSF regulations include:

- New regulatory requirements for pre-service educational qualifications for frontline staff and supervisors, and enhanced foster parent trainings.
- New requirements for child specific safety assessments and safety plans prior to placements.

- Further requirements to enhance the youth's voice in the care they receive.
- Clarification and establishment of the rules and restrictions specific to the use of physical and mechanical restraints.
- Enhanced expectations regarding the planning for a child or youth's education.
- Amendments to the complaints requirements to support fairer, impartial, transparent and objective complaints mechanisms for children, youth and their families.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Child welfare is a highly regulated field, governed by the Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA), which provides the legal framework for protecting children and supporting families in Ontario. The work of Children's Aid Societies is subject to rigorous accountability measures overseen by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). To ensure that services are delivered in ways that promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children and youth, the government sets a number of Regulations that are subject to formal reviews. In the past year JF&CS has participated in three of such reviews.

1. Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)

MCCSS requires Children's Aid Societies to submit reports twice a year, assessing each agency's compliance with established child welfare standards. MCCSS designates specific reporting months and notes that the purpose of these reports is not only to monitor compliance, but also to provide agencies with an opportunity to strengthen service delivery. Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) further promote consistency across the sector by establishing benchmarks and comparisons between agencies.

JF&CS tracks this compliance data on a monthly basis and submits the required reports to the Ministry. The child welfare department has consistently demonstrated compliance with the standards. On the rare occasions where one indicator has not met full compliance, the variance has been attributed to either administrative error or a small data sample size. JF&CS's Program Supervisor at MCCSS has commended staff for their work, and the data reflects that both front line staff and management recognize compliance as an important measure of practice.

2. Extended Society Care Review

MCCSS conducts Extended Society Care reviews for all cases where a child or youth has been in Extended Care for more than two years. These reviews assess whether agencies are meeting legislative and policy requirements, while also ensuring their placements are meeting all of their needs. Particular attention is given to a young person's health, education and permanency plans.

This year, representatives from MCCSS reviewed the files for each of the four children in Extended Care, conducted a foster home visit, and interviewed JF&CS staff. The review, completed in June identified no issues of concern.

3. Foster Care Licensing

A foster care license review is a mandated evaluation conducted by MCCSS to ensure that foster care agencies and homes comply with the standards set out in the CYFSA. The purpose of these reviews is to safeguard children and youth by verifying that foster homes provide safe, nurturing, and supportive environments, while also ensuring consistency and accountability across the province. These annual

reviews monitor compliance, identify areas for improvement, and maintain public trust in the child welfare system.

This year representatives from MCCSS randomly selected and read several child-in-care and foster family files. They also visited a few foster homes and met with the caregivers. The review, completed in July, concluded with JF&CS receiving its license to continue operating foster homes.

The Ministry commended JF&CS for the high quality of care provided to children and youth in foster care, highlighting the dedication, nurturing approach, and commitment of foster parents. They also recognized the excellent level of service delivered by staff, noting the professionalism and support offered to families and children. In addition, they were impressed with the agency's collaboration and responsiveness during the two reviews, reflecting a strong and positive working relationship.

CALLS TO ACTION FROM OUR INDIGENOUS PARTNERS

The history and impact of harmful child welfare policy and practices on Indigenous peoples has created a divide and mistrust that continues to be deeply ingrained and threaded through multiple generations. With targeted practices related to Canadian Colonization and the passing of laws, including the British North America Act and the Indian Act, Indigenous peoples have been marginalized, segregated and left dependent on the government and its institutions. Child welfare agencies in Ontario are deeply concerned about the over-representation of Indigenous children in their care and the critical feedback from Indigenous communities about the current system's negative impact on Indigenous children, families and communities. The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and child welfare agencies across Ontario have worked to evolve several priorities in support of Indigenous child welfare and improving services to Indigenous families while trying to mitigate the over-representation of Indigenous children in child welfare throughout the province.

Some of these activities have included:

- Development of a Reconciliation Framework from OACAS intended to guide agencies to rebuild relationships and support restoration through enhanced advocacy in partnership with local First Nation communities that compels the Ministry to devolve services.
- Think Tank consultation process with representation of Executive Directors, OACAS and leadership from Indigenous service providers, communities and political bodies.
- Executive Leadership Section cultural awareness engagements.
- Executive Leadership beginning to mark milestones in the journey through Acknowledgement and Apology engagements. In July 2017, the Ontario child welfare sector unanimously agreed to prioritize Reconciliation with Indigenous communities through eight key commitments (specifically addressed further in this report).

Inherent Jurisdiction

On January 1, 2020, the Federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families came into force. This Act affirms the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and family regarding the provision of child welfare services, and establishes national principles to guide service provision for Indigenous families. It also provides a mechanism for Indigenous governing bodies to provide notice of their decision to exercise their own legislative authority with respect to the provision of child welfare services. Over the past few years, some Indigenous governing bodies have fulfilled the process in the Federal Act so that their Indigenous law is administered and prevails over federal, provincial and territorial laws.

KEY INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

At JF&CS, we engage in several initiatives to ensure that we are delivering the most client-centric service possible to our community. These initiatives include:

LEADING THROUGH SERVICE EXCELLENCE, ENHANCING AND SUPPORTING OUR CLINICAL MODEL OF SERVICE

| Initiative | Activity |
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| Multi-Service Wrap-Around Approach | <p>Our child welfare services are fully integrated with over thirty other programs and services at JF&CS. These include child and adult mental health, woman abuse, financial assistance, educational/vocational support, individual, couple and group counselling services, and youth preparation for independence programs and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2020-2021, 599 families receiving child welfare services also received other supportive services through JF&CS.• In 2021-2022, 244 families receiving child welfare services also received other supportive service through JF&CS.• In 2022-2023, 205 families receiving child welfare services also received other supportive service through JF&CS.• In 2023-2024, 194 families receiving child welfare services also received other supportive service through JF&CS.• In 2024-2025, 200 families receiving child welfare services also received other supportive services through JF&CS. <p>* Note that the number was noticeably higher over the 2020-2021 period. This was due to the significant impact individuals and families were experienced during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic along with the limited community services outside of JF&CS that were available during that time.</p> |
| Domestic Violence-Child Welfare Co-Location Model | <p>At JF&CS, child welfare workers and woman abuse workers work closely together to safely plan and support families where domestic violence is present. When appropriate, workers consult with one another, attend home visits together, and work within a collaborative model. On any given day, at least one child protection worker and one woman abuse worker are available to respond to an urgent situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2020-2021, 83 families receiving child welfare services also received counselling services through our Woman Abuse Program.• In 2021-2022, 98 families receiving child welfare services also received counselling services through our Woman Abuse Program.• In 2022-2023, 75 families receiving child welfare services also received counselling services through our Woman Abuse Program.• In 2023-2024, 54 families receiving child welfare services also received counselling services through our Woman Abuse Program• In 2024-2025, 58 families receiving child welfare services also received counselling services through our Woman Abuse Program |

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| | <p>*Note: The number of families receiving both services has decreased during the five year span. This is related to the overall drop in referrals to the child welfare department. What is important to highlight is the intentional partnerships between the child protection and Violence Against Woman teams has strengthened. The two teams have participated in trainings together and there has been a standard of practice in consulting with one another to strategize how best to engage with clients and work for best outcomes.</p> <p>Over the next year, JF&CS will be expanding its Family Violence Program to provide trauma-informed services to all family members experiencing family violence, including men and children.</p> |
| Poverty Reduction | <p>Poverty Reduction activities at JF&CS seek to address the individual and systemic barriers a person living in poverty may face. Our approach centers around building a person's assets along multiple dimensions, including basic needs, skills, and employment.</p> <p>JF&CS has adopted the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) (Murray & Ferguson, 2001) as the theoretical model underlying its Poverty reduction efforts. The SLF addresses the human (ex. employable skills and knowledge, good physical and mental health) and social capital (e.g., personal and professional networks) involved in moving out of poverty while also addressing the role of systemic pressures (e.g., unaffordable housing). This comprehensive approach addresses the complex and numerous causes and consequences of poverty and the interplay between them.</p> <p>While supplementary budgets are still a component of our Poverty Reduction suite of services, they are guided by Holistic Case Management, due-diligence in reviewing financial and bank records, and approvals from a Standing Committee that reviews every budget to determine the appropriate level of support, based on the client's circumstances and potential. This process ensures clients receive a full array of timely and appropriate services, of which financial support is only one part. Positions and services of this program include:</p> <p>Financial Advocacy, Empowerment, and Problem-solving Services (FEPS) Worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting in accessing services and benefits (ex. debt consolidation, tax filing, subsidized housing application) • Assisting in creating and managing a budget and setting financial goals • Providing individual and group sessions focusing on financial literacy and financial empowerment <p>Food Security:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing short-term case management, service coordination and access to funds to purchase food |

Housing Case Aide Worker:

- Supporting clients in accessing affordable housing
- Ensuring clients are on the appropriate wait-lists for affordable housing
- Supporting clients in keeping their housing
- Liaising with community and government partners related to housing

Opportunity Funds (additional funds to assist in providing opportunities for special additional needs) such as:

- Extra-curricular, educational, recreational and social activities for children and youth
- Post-secondary educational needs for young adults
- Support for children and youth with special needs
- Vocational training and recertification for adults
- Simcha- Life cycle events
- Support to seniors
- Emergency needs for abused women
- Hospice funds
- Emergency housing and homelessness prevention

Other:

- Assistance with the provision of beds/mattresses
- Alpha Omega dental program
- JRCC furniture bank
- Produce boxes
- Holiday assistance

Financial Support:

- In 2020-2021, 599 instances of financial support were provided to families receiving child welfare services.
- In 2021-2022, 295 instances of financial support were provided to families receiving child welfare services.
- In 2022-2023, 277 instances of financial support were provided to families receiving child welfare services
- In 2023-2024, 245 instances of financial support were provided to families receiving child welfare services
- In 2024-2025, 203 instances of financial support were provided to families receiving child welfare services.

* **Note** The number of families receiving financial support was significantly higher in the first two years listed due to the pandemic when some clients were eligible for special time-limited Government grants.

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| JVS/JF&CS Joint Employment Program | <p>JVS/JF&CS Joint Employment Program is a collaborative effort between Jewish Vocation Services (JVS) and JF&CS to empower individuals in our community to break the cycle of poverty by achieving self-sufficiency through meaningful employment. Clients may present with a range of circumstances and personal difficulties that present barriers to re-employment, such as separation and divorce, depression and anxiety, significant mental health issues, family violence, lack of sufficient skills or work experience, criminal records, physical health challenges and disabilities.</p> <p>The program combines financial and psychosocial support from JF&CS social workers and in depth employment counselling by JVS employment specialists.</p> <p>For 2024-2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46 JF&CS clients were to the Joint Employment Program • 64 employment assessments were completed • 24 individuals obtained employment • 4 individuals gained long-term skill upgrades including Better Job Ontario |
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IMPROVING AND ENHANCING SERVICES TO YOUTH WHO HAVE/WILL BE TRANSITIONING OUT OF CARE INTO INDEPENDENCE

| Initiative | Activity |
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| Pearl Project | <p>The Pearl Project was launched in 2015 to support and serve young people who have graduated or "aged out" of the foster care system. JF&CS founded The Pearl Project to support youth with practical needs - housing, employment, education, and financial matters. These young adults are also supported with their need for community, mentorship, connections and a sense of belonging, all in the context of a long-term commitment to their success and wellbeing. The word "Pearl" was chosen because pearls begin as grains of sand and only develop when the appropriate cushioning, protection and support is provided.</p> <p>In April 2019, JF&CS commissioned a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) Study concerning the Pearl Project to determine the long-term return for every dollar invested in the Pearl Project members. By analyzing potential benefits concerning the avoidance or decreased use of mental health services, avoided incarceration, lower rates of accessing Ontario Works (as a result of unemployment, and the corresponding gains to the government of annual tax revenues (as a result of being employed) the CBA revealed that there would be a government return of \$9.40 per every \$1 invested.</p> |

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| | <p>Over the past year the Pearl Project has continued working with a number of community partnerships which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allan Mayer Counselling – individual and career counselling • Benjamin's Funeral Home – support for youth when a family member has died • Chef Jordan Wagman – mentorship for youth wanting to learn about the restaurant business • Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy – Treatment for youth who have experienced significant trauma • Harold Green Jewish Theatre – opportunity for youth to learn about Jewish history and customs through story • Horses at Heart – specialized equine assisted therapy for clients • Horse Therapy Centre of Canada - specialized equine therapy • JVS – employment support for clients • MAC Suites – access to free furniture for clients • Miles Nadal JCC- discounted membership for clients • Dr. Wendy Moore – Psychiatric services for clients • Ontario Flute Centre – lessons for clients • PARC Connections Program – resources to help clients with housing and employment • Prosserman JCC – discounted membership for clients • Schwartz-Reisman Centers – discounted membership for clients • Shoresh – nature based programming for clients • Stepstones for Youth – mentorship and housing support for clients • WJ Properties – access to affordable housing units for clients |
| | <p>Pearl Project Data Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 Pearl Project clients served over this period • 44% of youth received short-term and/or ongoing financial assistance • 100% of youth received one-time financial support • 28% of youth received other agency support and referrals <p>The type of financial support included service through the tax clinic, food security and housing programs</p> |
| Counselling Cases when CIC closes | <p>As a fully integrated, multi-service agency, the day a youth turn 23 years old and their RSG time has finished, a counselling file is opened so the youth, if agreeable, can continue receiving support from JF&CS. This further supports youth in their transition to adulthood.</p> |

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

| Initiative | Activity |
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| Supporting children and youth to remain in their own homes and communities | <p>At JF&CS, a high value is placed on supporting children and youth to remain in their families of origin. As such, significant efforts have been made (as indicated in our clinical model of service) to support families in crisis via targeted prevention work. However, when children and youth cannot be cared for by their parents or guardians, their next best placement is within their extended family or community network. Such an arrangement is known as a "kinship" placement. Finding, establishing and maintaining kinship arrangements can be quite labour intensive. It often requires a large amount of financial and clinical support, but the benefits to the families and children we serve are significant. With this focus, the number of children and youth in the care of the agency remains low.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020-2021, this average was 28. • In 2021-2022, this average was 31. • In 2022-2023, this average was 31. • In 2023-2024, this average was 27. • In 2024-2025, this average was 20. <p>Out of all the children receiving child protection services from JF&CS, very few of them are ever admitted into the care of the agency. Over the past five years the number has consistently been over 98%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020-2021, 98.8% of children and youth who received service remained in the care of their family • In 2021-2022, 98.9% of children and youth who received service remained in the care of their family • In 2022-2023 98.2% of children and youth who received service remained in the care of their family • In 2023-2024, 98% of children and youth who received service remained in the care of their family • In 2024-2025, 98.2% of children and youth who received service remained in the care of their family. |
| Targeted Prevention Work | <p>The agency places a strong emphasis on supporting families to parent their children. Several efforts are made to strengthen families and parents' ability to raise and nurture their children safely. When risk factors are identified within a family, our child protection staff focus on targeted prevention. Many in-home supports are implemented, such as Child and Youth Workers (CYW), financial assistance, camp subsidies, clothing, gas/transportation support, furniture and baby supplies, instrumental and financial assistance for accessing extra-curricular activities, counselling and assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020-2021, \$29,777 was allocated to such supports. • In 2021-2022, \$47,753 was allocated to such supports. • In 2022-2023, \$66,694 was allocated to such supports. • In 2023-2024, \$61,781 was allocated to such supports. • In 2024-2025 \$68,327 was allocated to support supports |

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| | <p>Note that in the 2020-2021 period, fewer dollars were allocated to in-home and community supports. It is believed that a significant reason for this was that many of these supports were not available in person or were provided virtually during the Covid 19 "Stay-at-Home" orders. As expected, the previous and current period illustrates an increase in these allocations, more in line with previous years.</p> |
| Child and Youth Worker Support | <p>Over the last year, a full-time dedicated Child and Youth Worker (CYW) has been working only with children, youth and families receiving child welfare service. This worker provides in-home support where there is an identified risk that may lead to a child or youth's placement in foster care. Common scenarios precipitating the need for a CYW include parent/teen conflict where the CYW provides support and parenting strategies for the family. Another situation could be one in which a youth is questioning their gender identity and CYW provides support to the family to prevent a family breakdown.</p> |
| Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) | <p>ADR is a strategy to streamline court processes and/or adversarial client-agency relationships and encourage alternatives to court action. It focuses on a more strength-based, inclusive and collaborative approach to resolving child protection disputes and encourages the involvement and support of the family, extended family and community in planning and decision making for children.</p> <p>Through ADR efforts, as well as our multi-service, wrap-around clinical model of service, the number of child protection cases requiring Court interventions remains very low.</p> <p>This is evidenced by the percentage of active child protection cases before the Courts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020-2021, this percentage was 5.5%. This means that 94.5% of families were involved on a voluntary basis with the agency. • In 2021-2022, this percentage was 3.4%. This means that 96.6% of families served through child protection were working voluntarily with the agency. • In 2022-2023, this percentage was 1.8% (8 referrals to ADR). This means that 98.2% of families serviced through child protection were working voluntarily with the agency. • In 2023-2024, this percentage was 9.1% (8 referrals to ADR). This means that 90.8% serviced through child protection were working voluntarily with the agency. • In 2024-2025, this percentage was 6.7% (5 referrals to ADR). This means that 93.3% of families worked voluntarily with the agency. |

FINDING PERMANENCY FOR ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE

| Initiative | Activity |
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| Family Finding | <p>The goal of Family Finding is to connect each child with members of the child's family, extended family and community of origin, so that every child may benefit from the lifelong connections that a family and community provide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 2019-2020, the family finder engaged with 10 additional child protection cases. Within these 10 cases, 7 kin placements were approved. In addition to these cases, 3 children placed in foster care, were subsequently placed with kin thanks to the efforts of the family finder. • For 2020-2021, the family finder engaged with 8 child protection cases. As a result, 4 of these protection cases subsequently led to kin placements, thus preventing those children from coming into the care of the agency. The family finder also engaged in searching for families related to 3 cases of Children in Care. In one of these instances, the child ended up being discharged from care and placed in the care and custody of kin. • For the 2021-2022 period, the family finder engaged with 11 child protection cases where there was potential for children to be placed outside of the biological home and in the care of the agency. As a result, 7 of these children were successfully placed with kin and thus, were not placed in foster care. 2 of the children were able to remain with their biological families, with support. • For the 2022-2023 period, the family finding model was used in 18 child protection cases where there was potential for children to be placed outside of the biological home and in the care of the agency • For the 2023-2024 period, the family finding model was used in 4 child protection cases where there was potential for 6 children to be placed outside of the biological home and in the care of the agency. • For the 2024-2025 period, the family finding model was used in 4 child protection cases where there was potential for 8 children to be placed outside of the biological home and in the care of the agency |

IMPLIMENTING PROVINCIAL PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES

| Initiative | Activity |
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| Indigenous Commitments | <p>There is a history of legislated oppression and cultural genocide of the First Nations, Inuit, and Metis (FNIM) people of Canada. From the 1960s through some of the 1990s, 130 "Residential Schools" were created across Canada in which a total of 150,000 FNIM children were sent. These children were removed from their families and were immersed in both Christian and Anglo European traditions and values, while their Aboriginal languages and identities were suppressed. The schools themselves bore stark conditions, with excessive discipline and occasional brutality.</p> |

In 1951, legislation was enacted to enable provincial child welfare service delivery to status Indians on reserve. This led to what has been called the "60s Scoop", a practice in child welfare in which social workers, tried to resolve the problems associated with the condition of FNMI children, by apprehending them from their families, and placing them in Residential Schools . In 1950, there were only a few FNMI children in the care of provincial child welfare systems. However by 1980, FNMI children, who comprised 2% of the nation's child population at that time, made up 12% of the population of children in care. This trend/injustice continues today.

The legacy of the 60s Scoop continues to be felt. Large numbers of FNMI children were apprehended and placed for adoption, almost always with non-FNMI families, in different provinces or outside of the country. Of all status Indian children apprehended between 1971 and 1981, 70-85% were adopted by non-FNMI parents.

In recognition of the legacy of residential schools and the Sixties Scoop, Child Welfare in Ontario has been actively building relationships with the First Nations communities across the province and restoring the responsibility of providing child welfare services back to indigenous communities.

The release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) report in the spring of 2015, has made the child welfare sector redouble its efforts. The final report includes five (5) recommendations that specifically call out child welfare and relate to principles of connection, responsibility, involvement of the community in the lives of their children, and acknowledging cultural differences, in that one size doesn't fit all in terms of engaging with families. As a result of this, many initiatives have been enacted through OACAS to respond to the very specific needs of the FNMI population. Nine (9) key commitments have been made and are being actively pursued by all child welfare agencies in the province.

These include:

- Reduce the number of Indigenous children in care
- Reduce the number of legal files involving Indigenous children and families
- Increase the use of formal Customary Care
- Ensure there is Indigenous representation on the Board level
- Implement mandatory Indigenous training for staff
- In consultation with Indigenous communities, create a unique agency plan to better address the needs of the children and families in those communities
- Continue to develop relationships between local agency and Indigenous communities
- Connection to culture and identity for children in care: involvement in community events, teachings, customs and ceremonies
- Change inter-agency protocol to include Jordan's Principle as a fundamental principle. (Jordan's Principle states that FNMI children should get the same health and social services and supports as all

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| | <p>other children in Canada, regardless of where they live. Issues of jurisdiction must not be allowed to become a barrier to the realization of this principle}.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020, a new policy directive was issued approving the use of "Heart and Spirit" as a home study process for the Indigenous people as an alternative to SAFE and PRIDE. This process for approving foster/customary care providers and adoption applicants in the Indigenous community is grounded in Indigenous values, philosophies and practices focused on Indigenous child and youth caring traditions. <p>The JF&CS's primary contact with the Indigenous community had historically been in conducting sensitive investigations where a conflict of interest was identified by Native Child and Family (NCFS). However this has no longer been needed since NCFS has been referring their sensitive investigations to another Indigenous Child and Family Wellbeing agency, that was designated in a neighbouring jurisdiction.</p> <p>JF&CS, NCFS and other Indigenous Child and Family Wellbeing agencies continue to enjoy a collaborative partnership that, at its core, shares an understanding and sensitivity of intergenerational trauma.</p> <p>In 2022, all JF&CS child welfare staff participated in a training provided by The Association of Native Child and Family Services of Ontario (ANCFSAO) "Becoming an Ally : Culturally Safe Child Welfare Practice with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Families in Ontario. This two day training is a cultural awareness training for child welfare workers and professionals serving Indigenous children and families.</p> <p>In the past year the child welfare staff have participated in Community of Practice sessions, team meetings and events surrounding National Truth and Reconciliation day to learn more about the impact of the child welfare system on the Indigenous community in Toronto and beyond.</p> |
| <p>One Vision One Voice</p> | <p>One Vision One Voice (OVOV) is a program led by the African Canadian community. It is funded by the Ontario Government through the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and addresses the overrepresentation and experiences of disparities faced by African Canadian families in the child welfare system. The OVOV program, in partnership with the African Canadian community, has developed a Practice Framework, made up of 11 Race Equity Practices, to be used by child welfare staff to improve outcomes for African Canadian children and families. The goal is to address the disproportionalities and eliminate the disparities in outcomes for African Canadian families when involved with the child welfare system.</p> |

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| | <p>The core 11 Race Equity Practices are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commit to courageous leadership 2. Collect and analyze data to measure racial disproportionality and disparities 3. Evaluate programs and monitor performance 4. Allocate appropriate and dedicated resources 5. Engage African-Canadian parents and communities 6. Engage and educate mandated referrers 7. Establish effective internal complaints mechanisms 8. Enhance human resource management 9. Provide daily supervision, ongoing training, and supports for staff, volunteers and caregivers 10. Establish collaborations and partnerships 11. Strengthen the ability of caregivers to support African-Canadian children and youth <p>The CEO and senior leadership team are committed to using an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion lens in developing policies, procedures and organizational strategies. As an organization, JF&CS is committed to service delivery that is equity informed and combats Anti-Black racism.</p> |
| <p>French Language Services</p> | <p>French is an official language in Canada and in Ontario, the French language is recognized as an official language in the courts and in education. As such, in an effort to recognize the contribution of the cultural heritage of the French speaking population and the need to preserve it for future generations, on July 1, 2011, the Ontario Legislative Assembly passed Regulation 284/11. This Regulation mandated all government funded agencies to have an "active offer" of French Language Services (FLS). Having an active offer of FLS means that services in French are readily available, easily accessible and of comparable quality to those offered in English.</p> <p>In February 2013, the OACAS hosted a summit to promote knowledge and develop strategies on delivering FLS within the Ontario child welfare sector. The OACAS French Language Advisory Committee collaborated with Marie-France LeFort, Owner and Principal of Proforem Inc. to develop the "Guide For Moving Forward On French Language Services In Ontario's Child Welfare Sector". At this time, each CAS identified a FLS Champion to take the lead on ensuring that their agency is working toward implementing an active offer of French Language Services.</p> <p>Having an "active offer" of FLS includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bilingual greeting in person and on the phone • The visual identification of all bilingual staff • The publication of documents in a bilingual format and the transmission of correspondence in the official language preferred by the family • Bilingual Website • The positing of bilingual signs |

JF&CS is committed to having an active offer of French Services for our clients. This past year we have had no requests for services in French. Despite the lack of French speaking clients, the agency has taken several steps to ensure French is not a barrier to service. Some initiatives include the following:

- Identification of all bilingual staff
- A list of all agencies offering French Language Services, which Intake can access and offer to referral sources and clients.
- Actively promoting, supporting and collaborating with the Central Zone Children's Aid Societies to support the provision of FLS in the community.
- An agreement with another GTA Children's Aid Society with larger FLS capacity which outlines a process in which this CAS will conduct a child protection investigation on behalf of JF&CS if a family requests services in French.
- Modified our website which now include more French content and information regarding how to access FLS in the community.
- A general phone message redirecting clients to services in French
- Agency pamphlets and relevant external communication are available in French.
- Signage posted in the reception areas at all branches are also in French including referral information for French Language Services

PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH WITHIN OUR GREATER COMMUNITY

| Initiative | Activity |
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| Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) | <p>Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee: In 2023, JF&CS hired a Manager of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) role. The Manager participates in our staff EDI Committee and serves as the lead on all EDI initiatives across the agency. The Manager is also engaged in agency-wide strategic activities as the staff liaison for the Board of Directors' EDI Committee and a member of the steering committee updating the strategic organizational EDI plan. Additionally, with the support of the senior management team, the EDI Manager is working towards the creation of Employee Resource Groups to engage staff in opportunities to lead internal change.</p> <p>Over the course of the past year, the staff EDI Committee led a number of agency initiatives, including coordinating events for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation day, Black History Month and Pride Month activities.</p> <p>EDI Survey and Training Initiatives The work of the EDI Manager has included the establishment of an annual demographic staff survey, delivered with assistance from the Research and Evaluation team. This survey provides a statistical baseline and a current snapshot that will help to guide our next steps in the agency's overall EDI plan.</p> <p>In the aftermath of the October 7, 2023 Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel, JF&CS took a pause on previously planned EDI-related training initiatives to rethink its approach. This reflective period led to the hiring of Tema Smith to facilitate antisemitism training, which was delivered in the spring of 2024, and followed by fireside chats with agency staff in the summer of 2024. The results of these activities, along with data from the staff survey, were used by former OACAS Executive Director, Nicole Bonnie, to deliver tailored JF&CS EDI Foundations Training over the past year.</p> <p>Community Collaborations JF&CS is participating in a working group with the support of the University of Toronto to develop a Pride mental health clinic for 2SLGBTQ+ (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning and additional sexual orientations and gender identities) children, youth and families served by the child welfare system. The group is working on a proposal to establish specialized services to address major health inequalities for 2SLGBTQ+ youth across Ontario.</p> <p>JF&CS is also partnering with Jewish 2SLGBTQ+ service providers in Toronto to network and share best practices, education and community information.</p> <p>JF&CS participates in a SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression) community of practice, which is a meeting involving</p> |

SOGIE leads from the various child welfare and Indigenous wellbeing agencies in the GTA. This group came together to form a circle of practice among other SOGIE individuals to share, inspire, learn and support each other in this work.

JF&CS enthusiastically and proudly participates in Toronto's PRIDE parade every year.

Consultations:

- There continues to be consultations with agency staff regarding 2SLGBTQI+ children, clients and families

Building Internal Capacity:

- Staff have participated in a training series through York Region District School Board on 2SLGBTQI+ identities and experiences followed by 2SLGBTQI+ 201 Clinical Considerations, which focused on equipping clinicians with perspectives and tools for supporting Queer students and families.
- The staff have also attended learning sessions and training offered by OACAS.

Groups and Workshops:

- Jewish Rainbow Alliance; a drop-in support group for parents and caregivers to discuss parenting 2SLGBTQ+ children. This group runs four (4) times a year or more, based on need, and will be expanding, following a new collaboration/partnership with the Schwartz/Reisman Center.
- JF&CS sponsored and attended the "8 Gays of Chanukah," hosted by Drag Queen superstar, Gila Munster. This queer, Jewish variety show showcased Toronto's queer and Jewish talent to raise funds for North America's first queer and Jewish sleepover summer camp.

No Silence on Race (NSOR):

A Canadian organization committed to making Jewish spaces safer for Jews of Colour. JF&CS has signed as an ally to follow their nine (9) pillars as guiding principles for how we can better provide service to racialized Jews in our community.

These Pillars are:

- Allyship
- Education
- Indigenous Education
- Equity Consultation
- Employment
- Anti-Racism Advisory
- Jews of Colour Leadership
- Programming and Partnership
- Jews of Colour Voices

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| | <p>We are committed to working with other Jewish organizations in addressing the barriers to service and participation in mainstream Jewish life that Jews and other people of colour experience.</p> <p>NSOR has created a documentary, Periphery, with a suite of educational materials that can be used to talk about the experiences of Jews of Colour within the Jewish community and beyond. They have indicated their continuing interest in sharing their knowledge and tools with JF&CS in the future, and discussions about their potential inclusion in future training sessions, panel discussions, and other initiatives are ongoing.</p> <p>Inclusivity Statement: JF&CS has adopted the following statement: "JF&CS strives for inclusivity in all its programs, serving community members of any income, family structure, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religious affiliation, level of observance, race, ethnicity, cultural identity and place of origin.</p> <p>Practice Principle: The child welfare department is committed to engaging in ongoing learning about anti-oppressive practice in team meeting discussions, Community of Practice sessions and trainings.</p> |
| CARE Unit | <p>Child at Risk of Exploitation (CARE) units are part of the province-wide effort to combat human trafficking. There are two CARE Units, one in Toronto and one in Durham. Each unit has CAS and law enforcement working together toward prevention and early identification of human trafficking, as well as on the responses and interventions for children and youth who are victims of or at risk of sexual exploitation. JF&CS participates in monthly meetings with representatives from service partners, other child welfare agencies, the police and the Ministry in order to learn how best to provide service to these at risk youth.</p> <p>This past year we have modified the intake template used by child welfare staff when there is a new referral from the community to include questions about Human Trafficking. One of the staff participated in a 5 day specialized training program on the subject and subsequently facilitated a Community of Practice session to share the learnings.</p> <p>In the past year JF&CS staff have consulted with workers on the Toronto CARE unit about 7 youth.</p> |

KEY PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

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| CAS/VAW (Violence Against Women) Collaboration Advisory Committee | The VAW/CAS Advisory Committee is a community based advisory group that disseminates information and recommendations from MCCSS, and works across the CAS/VAW sector to increase collaboration and enhance service delivery for woman who are victims of domestic violence. |
| Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Roundtable | The IPV roundtable brings multiple Children's Aid Societies in the GTA and surrounding areas together to discuss agency policies and procedures around IPV, how each agency provides services to families who may be experiencing IPV, and other topics that are relevant to IPV. It is an opportunity to hear what other agencies are doing, to learn from one another in the hopes of providing the best possible service and outcomes to children, youth and families who are experiencing or have experienced IPV. |
| Central Zone Children's Aid Societies | Our involvement with the Central Zone Children's Aid Societies allows the agency to contribute to the broader (provincial) child welfare sector with respect to emerging issues as well as the coordination of services across all CASs. Some areas of focus include consistent and best practice service delivery, implementation of EDI strategies, reputation building; standards development; governance; government relations; service quality and quality improvement. |
| Children's Service System Review and Consultation (CSSRC) | CCSRC is the service resolution mechanism formulated to better support families with children, in the Toronto Region, who have complex special needs, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder. The CCSR was developed in 2005 to provide a forum where cases are presented for consultation so as to better address and navigate the children's service system needs and gaps. Through the consultation process, collaborative models of service are explored that strengthen service interconnectivity. Ongoing systemic quality improvement is supported by exploring trends and recommendations to case-specific situations. |
| Special Needs Advisory Group (SNAG) | SNAG aims to advise professionals serving children/youth who have a developmental disability, dual diagnosis and/or complex medical needs, when Service coordination strategies at the local level have been exhausted. It provides a venue for service providers to problem solve with other community partners to resolve service issues and identify gaps in the system and/or situations that require a multiple sector response and need to be reviewed at the CSSRC. |
| Director of Service Group (OACAS) | The Provincial Director of Service Group brings together service leaders from across the province representing both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous child welfare agencies and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. This group recognizes the need to continuously assess, evaluate and grow the sector in a way that is both strategic and impacts the day to day service delivery of child welfare services in Ontario. |
| Duty To Report | Several JF&CS child protection staff regularly attend schools (Jewish Day Schools and public schools), synagogues, camps and other organizations |

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| | to provide information and training with respect to child abuse and neglect. There is also an educational component about professionals' duty to report concerns to a Children's Aid Society. |
| Education Liaison Program | The Education Liaison Program was established a few years ago and is comprised of a variety of members from across children's aid societies, school board personnel, and others. The members support and consult with each other to advance high quality education of children/youth in care and post-secondary success. The committee also accesses short-term funding to help maintain children in their existing school placements via bus-passes or taxis, and stability supports such as devices, tutoring, and assessments. |
| Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FASD) Leadership Team | The focus of this table is to enhance knowledge of FASD in Ontario by providing consultation and training to agencies, individuals and families within the GTA. Representatives of our front-line staff have been trained and certified as FASD leads in the GTA, and participate on this leadership team. |
| Help Ahead | Help Ahead is the newly developed Centralized Intake referral service that connects children and youth with mental health and addiction services in their community. The program is operated by Strides Toronto. The intake line is available to access day treatment and residential treatment programs as well as accessing other children's mental health services. |
| Kinship Resource Managers Meetings | Our Child Welfare Resource Manager participates in this group which assists with the implementation of provincial initiatives for both Kinship Service and Kinship Care families, including new policies and standards. The work includes looking at the impact of those standards and policies on CASs and front line staff and the identification of education/training gaps. This group also plans the annual Kinship Symposium. |
| York Regional Centralized Intake (YRCI) | Representatives from the children's mental health and child welfare agencies attend this group to present cases and explore services and potential placements for children and youth. |
| Lotus Health | Lotus Health is a health and advocacy program for children and youth under the age of 18 who are, or have previously experienced or are at risk of experiencing commercial sexual exploitation/trafficking. |
| Project Hope | This committee is comprised of members from Children's Aid Societies in York region, York Region Police, the Crown Attorney's Office, Emergency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Care (DASA), Victim's Witness Service and Cedar Centre to develop a Youth Advocacy Centre servicing children and youth who have experienced abuse in York Region, all under one roof. |
| Provincial Child Welfare Quality Network (Q-Net) | Our Director of Research and Evaluation participates in Q-Net, a network group which meets for the purpose of developing agency capacity, providing leadership and facilitating continuous quality improvement to support service excellence throughout the sector. There is a strong emphasis on the ongoing development of sector capacity to measure, monitor and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of child welfare services. |

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| Toronto Perinatal Best Practices Working Group | This working group was developed to support interagency collaboration amongst CAS and hospital staff, and to ensure client centered best practice guidelines are utilized with the goal of providing the best care possible for pregnant individuals and their babies. It includes four (4) sub-committees to address education across the child welfare and hospital sector, and cross-sector collaboration when child welfare involvement is required, either in hospital when families are giving birth or postpartum. The committees were formed following the Ministry directive to cease the use of "Birth Alerts" on October 15, 2020. |
| Toronto Extended Society's Care Educational Championship | This committee is comprised of members from Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Catholic Children's Aid Society, Native Child and Family Service and Jewish Family and Child Service, Toronto School Boards and post-secondary institutions. The purpose of this group is to discuss the intersection between child welfare, high school and post-secondary education and to create better outcomes for youth in care through education. |
| Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network (TCHTN) | This committee comprises of Toronto community partners to discuss issues pertaining to Human Trafficking and to build stronger capacity across the GTA. |
| Youth In Transition Worker Program (YITW) | The YITW program is comprised of several members, including the Ministry, who provide services and supports to help youth who are leaving care make a successful transition to adulthood. YIT workers help youth to develop and pursue their goals, and support them to identify, access, and navigate adult service systems relevant to their specific needs, including housing supports, education resources, employment services and training, life skills training, physical and mental health services, and legal services. |
| Youth Strategy Steering Committee | This committee is coordinated by 360 Kids, and has representation from a number of York Region community partners. The participants meet to address the issue of youth homelessness in York Region. |
| FOCUS Toronto | FOCUS (Furthering Our Communities Uniting Services) Toronto is a collaboration of over 190 Community Agencies led by a cross-sector partnership between the Toronto Police Service, the City of Toronto and the United Way of Greater Toronto. The model brings together the most appropriate community agencies through weekly situation tables to provide a focused, wrap-around, risk-mitigation approach to help the most vulnerable individuals and families who are at Acutely Elevated Risk (AER) due to complex crises, potential harm, and/or victimization. |
| Toronto Public Health and CAS Workgroup | Representatives from each of the Toronto child welfare agencies along with Toronto Public Health work together to best support families with young children. |
| York Region Public Health and CAS Workgroup | Representatives from the three child welfare agencies that operate in York region along with local Public Health work together to best support families with young children. |

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| OACAS - Senior Counsel Network Group | Senior counsel from each of the child welfare agencies collaborate and share expertise on legal matters in child welfare. |
| York Region cross-over youth committee | This group includes lawyers and child welfare staff and discuss how best to provide service to youth who are engaged with both the child welfare and youth criminal justice system. |

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