

CHILD WELFARE BUSINESS PLAN

2023-2024

INTRODUCTION

This document represents the 2023-2024 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.

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.

The work 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 training.

JF&CS VISION STATEMENT

A resilient community where hope, dignity, diversity and humanity thrive.

JF&CS MISSION STATEMENT

A multi-service agency that strengthens and supports individuals, children, families and communities by increasing safety and security, improving mental health and wellness and reducing the effects of poverty, within the context of Jewish values.

JF&CS ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

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

JF&CS STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The mission of JF&CS is to support the healthy development of individuals, children, families and communities through prevention, protection, counselling and education and advocacy services, within the context of Jewish values. This mission 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 3 key strategic priority areas of JF&CS:

1. INCREASING 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 also supported through our comprehensive array of woman abuse (VAW) services.

2. IMPROVING 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. REDUCING THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY

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. The goal of this priority area is to reduce the negative effects of poverty on the most vulnerable members of the community. Through the support of the Jewish community and United Jewish Appeal Federation of Greater Toronto (UJA), and other community funders and donors, JF&CS is able to provide a comprehensive array of services and supports to individuals and families experiencing poverty.

These three priority areas can and do overlap, both conceptually and in practice. JF&CS' client-centered model of service delivery seeks to ensure that all client needs are met 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 uses a holistic lens and has a comprehensive understanding of the community resources available to our clients. JF&CS also has partnerships with several community-based agencies in order to seamlessly 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 (2020-2024)

In 2020, JF&CS launched an updated Strategic Plan. This plan is centered on four (4) key strategic directions:

1. LEAD THROUGH SERVICE EXCELLENCE

- Partner through our Centre of Excellence with other professionals and organizations to continuously improve our services, based on evidence-informed and emerging best practices, for the short and long term, and share with broader communities.
- Undertake a service model review; build upon work already completed in this area; determine if our current model is financially sustainable; develop priorities for addressing the needs of vulnerable, diverse and marginalized populations in the communities we serve, and those we strive to serve.
- Develop a formalized plan to attract, retain and develop positions across the agency. Include opportunities for succession and mentorship. Address staffing supports, emerging competency requirements and ensure workplace diversity.
- Maintain service excellence by ensuring service provision is agile, responsive, innovative, creative and client-centered, while building on evidence-informed best practices.
- Support the mental health and wellness of staff throughout the ever-changing phases of the pandemic and whenever other challenges arise.
- Develop a formalized plan to address physical, technological, and logistical considerations, while adhering to privacy legislation and any related challenges, to ensure staff are able to effectively conduct their work, whether it is from home, the agency, or any other foreseeable setting.

2. PARTNER BROADLY TO IMPROVE LIVES AND COMMUNITIES

- Play a key role in strengthening our community's response to lonely, isolated seniors, leveraging opportunities to provide more holistic services, through additional funding and resourcing.
- Develop multi-agency responses to serving the needs of diverse, marginalized and vulnerable children, individuals, families and communities by offering integrated solutions (e.g. ethno-cultural agencies).

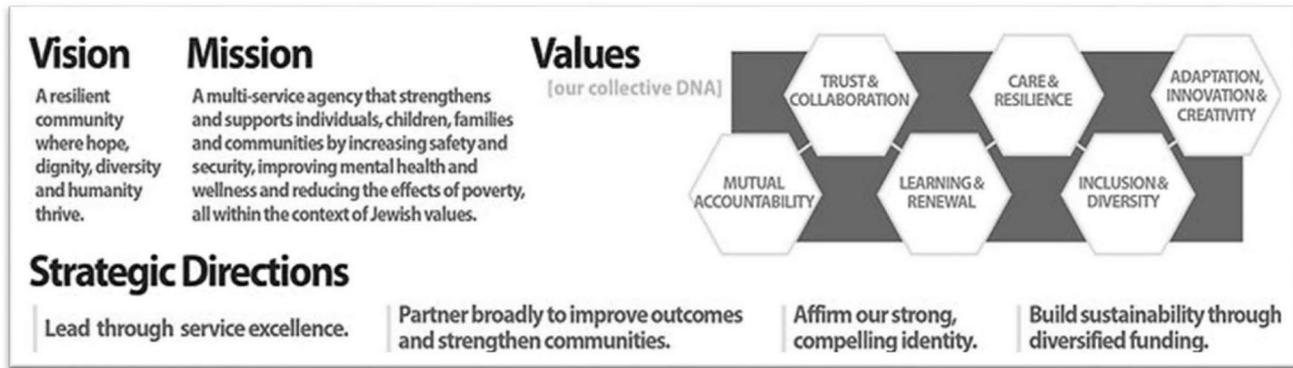
3. AFFIRM OUR STRONG, COMPELLING IDENTITY

- Develop a communication strategy, including key messages we want to share with all stakeholders.
- Seize every opportunity and use every means (channels/platforms) of communication at our disposal to clearly articulate, internally and externally, who we are, what we do and for whom we do it.

- Advocate for the continued health and welfare of our programs and services by ensuring our voice is heard and understood by influential decision-makers.
- Take a proactive stance in our communications on emerging issues to demonstrate that we are standing up for diversity and inclusion.

4. BUILD CAPACITY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE, DIVERSIFIED FUNDING

- Pursue non-traditional donors with shared values, particularly in the private sector, and find ways to align their philanthropic goals with ours.
- Seek out greater staff engagement in fundraising activities; develop a framework for meaningful involvement and contribution.
- Develop a recruitment strategy to attract diverse, passionate and engaged fundraisers for our Resource Development Committee and Board. Expand our reach beyond traditional not-for-profit partnerships (e.g., private sector) with aligned values; consider alternatives to in-person fundraising events.



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. Protective Protection services offered are governed by the Child, Youth and Family Services Act 2017, regulations and guidelines that are provided by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) related to the contents of the Act.

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 at the agency 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 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.

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.

The Ontario government also made further changes to CYFSA regulations which will come into force on January 1, 2025. These changes include additional requirements for a society when a child is in an adoption placement, including a requirement to prepare plans of care, conduct safety assessments, and prepare a safety plan if required. There will also be changes to the type of information required when an individual wants to work with vulnerable children or youth, beyond a criminal record check.

***Note:** The *Child, Youth, and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)* requires that the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) conduct a review every five years and report the results of the review to the public. The Ministry announced the review of the CYFSA in May 2023 and, through a series of engagement sessions with representatives from children’s aid societies and youth with lived experience, sought input from those with experience providing and receiving services covered under the CYFSA. The Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS) completed its written submission in July 2023 providing recommendations related to the six key areas that the Ministry identified (Child and youth rights; First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples; Equity and anti-racism; prevention and community based care; Quality services; and Accountability) as well as additional recommendations related to removing barriers to address human trafficking and clarifying aspects of the CYFSA by addressing gaps in the legislation.

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 that 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 or and 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.

This year, 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.

MCCSS is committed to prioritizing family-based placements and improving the group care experience for children and youth who cannot be placed in a family-based setting. MCCSS has committed to engaging with the child welfare sector to understand better the challenges associated with finding appropriate placement options for youth with complex needs.

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.

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 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 SUPPORTING STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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:

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: LEAD THROUGH SERVICE EXCELLENCE, ENHANCING AND SUPPORTING OUR CLINICAL MODEL OF SERVICE

Initiative	Activity
<p>Multi-Service Wrap-Around Approach</p>	<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 2019-2020, 279 families receiving child welfare services also received other supportive services through JF&CS.

<p>Multi-Service Wrap-Around Approach (cont.)</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. <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 that were available during that time.</p>
<p>Domestic Violence-Child Welfare Co-Location Model</p>	<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 "on - call" for potential emergencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019-2020, 89 families receiving child welfare services also received counselling services through our Woman Abuse Program. • 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 <p>*Note: The number of child welfare cases has decreased overall. Part of this is due to the "wrap-around" service delivery model and the ability to provide other agency services to families, thereby reducing risk where appropriate. It is hypothesized that the decrease in the amount of families serviced by the Woman Abuse Program is consistent with the reduction of families serviced by child welfare overall.</p>
<p>Poverty Reduction</p>	<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>

**Poverty Reduction
(cont.)**

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.

While supplementary budgets are still a component of our Poverty Reduction suite of services, they are undergirded 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:

Financial Advocacy, Empowerment, and Problem-solving Services (FEPS) Worker:

- 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

Food Security:

- 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

<p>Poverty Reduction (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with the provision of beds/mattresses • Alpha Omega dental program • JRCC furniture bank • Produce boxes • Holiday assistance <p>Financial Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019-2020, 519 instances of financial support were provided to families receiving child welfare services. • 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 <p>* Note that the figure has significantly reduced over the last three periods; it is hypothesized that this is attributed to a shift to a more holistic service provision, and changes in the way in which data was being captured.. Furthermore, throughout the 2020-2021/2 Covid-19 pandemic period, several of our clients were eligible for special time-limited Government grants.</p>
<p>JVS/JF&CS Joint Employment Program</p>	<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>

JVS/JF&CS Joint Employment Program (cont.)	<p>The program combines financial and psycho-social support from JF&CS social workers and in-depth employment counselling by JVS employment specialists.</p> <p>For 2020-2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JF&CS referred a total of 123 clients to the Joint Employment Program • 50% of individuals found meaningful employment and became financially self-sufficient. • Evidence that participants demonstrated movement toward a better labour market in the short-term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 8% completed an Unpaid Work Experience ○ 78% determined a clear career target/job objective ○ 13% upgraded their skills ○ 72% completed up-to-date and targeted resume(s) ○ 53% participated in pre-employment workshops ○ 54% worked actively with a Job Developer ○ 67% registered with the EMET-Employment online job board ○ 40% completed a LinkedIn profile ○ 30% attended Job Fairs or reported other active job search actions • Positive outcomes were demonstrated through 6 and 12-month follow-ups: 76% of the respondents were still employed after 6 months, and 63% after a year (please note that this does not include those we could not reach for information). <p>For 2021-2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JF&CS referred a total of 93 clients to the Joint Employment Program • 59% of individuals found meaningful employment and became financially self-sufficient. • Evidence that participants demonstrated movement toward a better labour market in the short-term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6% completed an Unpaid Work Experience ○ 73% determined a clear career target/job objective ○ 16% upgraded their skills ○ 75% completed up-to-date and targeted resume(s) ○ 28% participated in pre-employment workshops ○ 29% worked actively with a Job Developer ○ 54% registered with the EMET-Employment online job board ○ 28% completed a LinkedIn profile ○ 290% attended Job Fairs or reported other active job search actions
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**JVS/JF&CS Joint
Employment Program
(cont.)**

- Positive outcomes were demonstrated through 6 and 12-month follow-ups: 61% of the respondents were still employed after 6 months, and 58% after a year (please note that this does not include those we could not reach for information).

For 2022-2023:

- 87 JF&CS clients were referred to the Joint Employment Program. These individuals enrolled in the program to build their confidence and self-esteem, develop job search skills and acquire tools necessary to enter the labour market.
- Evidence that participants demonstrated movement toward a better labour market in the short-term:
 - 89 employability assessments were completed and accompanied by service plans.
 - 50% obtained employment and no longer rely on social or community assistance. 32% of long-time unemployed individuals with multiple and complex barriers enrolled in training and skills development for successful career pursuit. While in training, these individuals are not receiving social or community assistance.
 - 10% enrolled in work experience placements, which bridge them into the paid workforce through gaining experience, skills, references and confidence.
 - 40% were assisted in designing and posting LinkedIn profiles, which are increasingly important for career advancement and impact their job search.

For 2023-2024:

- 67 JF&CS clients were referred to the Joint Employment Program
- Evidence that participants demonstrated movement toward a better labour market in the short-term:
 - 64 employability assessments were accepted
 - 25 individuals obtained employment
 - 8 individuals gained long-term skills upgrades (including Better Job Ontario)

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: IMPROVING AND ENHANCING SERVICES TO YOUTH WHO HAVE/WILL BE GRADUATING OUT OF CARE INTO INDEPENDENCE

Initiative	Activity
<p>Pearl Project</p>	<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>The Pearl Project has forged a number of community partnerships, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allan Mayer Counselling – individual counselling and career exploration for clients • 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 – Specialized therapy for youth who have experienced significant trauma • Harold Green Jewish Theatre – opportunity for youth to learn about Jewish history/beliefs through story • Horses at Heart – specialized equine assisted therapy for clients • Horse Therapy Centre of Canada - specialized equine assisted therapy for clients • 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 (cont.)</p>	<p>Pearl Project Data Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 Pearl Project clients served over this period • 30% of youth received short-term and/or ongoing financial assistance • 78% of youth received one-time financial support • 26% of youth received other agency support and referrals <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>
<p>Counselling Cases when CIC closes</p>	<p>Being a fully integrated, multi-service agency, we were able to implement a practice that ensures that the day youth age out of care, we simultaneously open a counselling file for that youth/young adult and assign it to the same Child in Care Worker with whom the youth/young adult has established a relationship. This practice allows the agency to continue to help and support the youth to plan if they would like for a successful transition to adulthood beyond their 23rd birthday.</p>

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Initiative	Activity
<p>Supporting children and youth to remain in their own homes and communities</p>	<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 is 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 in the care of the agency remains low.</p>

<p>Supporting children and youth to remain in their own homes and communities (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019-2020, this average was 26. • 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 <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. This means that the large majority of children remain in the care of their own families/community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019-2020, 1.1% of children served through child protection services were admitted into the care of the agency; 98.6% remained in the care of their family/community. • In 2020-2021, 1.19% of children served through child protection services were admitted into the care of the agency; 98.8% remained in the care of their family/community. • In 2021-2022, 1.1% of children served through child protection services were admitted into the care of the agency; 98.9% remained in the care of their family/community. • In 2022-2023 1.8% of children served through child protection services were admitted into the care of the agency; 98.2% remained in the care of their family/community • In 2023-2024, 2% of children served through child protection services were admitted into the care of the agency; 98% of children remained in the care of their family/community.
<p>Targeted Prevention Work</p>	<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 2019-2020, \$40,525 was allocated to such supports. • 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.

<p>Targeted Prevention Work (cont.)</p>	<p><i>*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.</i></p>
<p>Child and Youth Worker Support</p>	<p>Over the last year, JF&CS hired a full-time dedicated Child and Youth Worker (CYW) to work with vulnerable children and youth. Since starting at the agency, this worker worked with 35 families where there was an identified risk that a child or youth would not be able to safely remain living at home. 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>
<p>Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR)</p>	<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 2019-2020, this percentage was 6.4%. This means that 93.6% of families served through child protection were working voluntarily with the agency. • In 2020-2021, this percentage was 5.5%. This means that 94.5% of families served through child protection were working voluntarily 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.

Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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STRATEGIC DIRECTION: FINDING PERMANENCY FOR ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE

Initiative	Activity
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"> • In 2018-2019, the family finder engaged in 13 additional child protection cases. Within these 13 cases, 12 kin placements were approved, which included 4 situations where children/youth were discharged from care and into Kinship homes. • 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.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: IMPLIMENTING PROVINCIAL PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES

Initiative	Activity
<p>Indigenous Commitments</p>	<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> <p>In 1951, legislation was enacted to enable provincial child welfare service delivery to status Indians on reserve. This lead 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.</p> <p>The legacy of the 60s Scoop continues to be felt. Large numbers of FNIM 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 FNIM population. Nine (9) key commitments have been made and are being actively pursued by all child welfare agencies in the province.</p>

<p>Indigenous Commitments (cont.)</p>	<p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 FNIM children should get the same health and social services and supports as all 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}. • 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 (if a conflict of interest is identified) on behalf of Native Child and Family (NCFS). In such situations, JF&CS would have consulted with NCFS in order to ensure that JF&CS had a full understanding of the clients' Indigenous identity and heritage and that the service and legislative requirements that arose from this identity were met in as culturally sensitive a manner as possible.</p> <p>With the number of Indigenous Child and Family Wellbeing agencies in the province growing, NCFS will now be referring their sensitive investigations to another Indigenous Child and Family Wellbeing agency, and thus, JF&CS's role in this regard will be decreasing.</p>
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<p>Indigenous Commitments (cont.)</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>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> <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>In 2023, JF&CS added a Manager of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to our staff compliment.</p>

<p>One Vision One Voice (cont.)</p>	<p>With respect to work on policies and procedures, organizational strategies including "Embedding our Values in the Workplace", decision-making, the CEO ensures equity and anti-oppression lenses are applied.</p> <p>JF&CS is committed to exercising leadership through an equity practice which reflects Jewish values, culture and identity.</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 <p>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.</p>

<p>French Language Services (cont.)</p>	<p>Some of initiatives that we have undertaken at JF&CS include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 has been developed 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. <p>Future initiatives for JF&CS include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify our website to include more French content and information regarding how to access FLS in the community. • A general phone message redirecting clients to services in French • Translate relevant agency pamphlets and relevant external communication into French. • Ensure that there is signage posted in the reception areas at all branches providing referral information for French Language Services • Officially designate bilingual staff by arranging for provincial testing. • Arrange for training of JF&CS staff regarding French Language Services.
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STRATEGIC DIRECTION: PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH WITHIN OUR GREATER COMMUNITY

Initiative	Activity
<p>Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)</p>	<p>Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee: In 2023, JF&CS hired a Manager of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) role. This new management position is the Chair of 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 spearheading the creation of Employee Resource Groups to directly engage staff in opportunities to lead internal change.</p>

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) (cont.)

Over the course of the past year, the staff EDI Committee led a number of agency initiatives, including coordinating events for the 2023 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation day, Black History Month and Pride Month activities. The Committee has begun a process of selecting 20-25 key Annual Days of Significance which will be given a special focus and communication each year. Examples of these are Canadian Jewish Heritage Month and Multiculturalism Day.

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.

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, are now being used by former OACAS Executive Director, Nicole Bonnie, to create tailored JF&CS EDI Foundations Training for the fall of 2024.

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.

In addition to this, JF&CS is partnering with Jewish 2SLGBTQ+ service providers in Toronto to network and share best practices, education and community information.

JF&CS participates in a SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression) community of practice, which is a meeting involving 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.

<p>Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) (cont.)</p>	<p>JF&CS enthusiastically and proudly participates in Toronto's PRIDE parade every year.</p> <p>Consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There continues to be consultations with agency staff regarding 2SLGBTQI+ children, clients and families <p>Building Internal Capacity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 upcoming session, @SLGNTQI+ Identity Affirming Activities Trainings session will focus on therapeutic activities designed to engage in exploration of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, building hope and resiliency and coping strategies • JF&CS EDI Manager hosted online workshops on "How to be a 2SLGBTQI+ Ally" which focused on terminology, pronouns and allied actions. • JF&CS EDI Manager hosted an in-person workshop, "Queer and Trans History and Future", which focused on queer and Trans history and current challenges to Trans rights. <p>Groups and Workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>No Silence on Race (NSOR):</p> <p>A Canadian organization committed to making Jewish spaces safer for Jews of Colour. JF&CS has signed on as an ally to follow their nine (9) pillars as guiding principles for how we can continue our anti-oppressive journey and become more welcoming and better serving of racialized Jews in our community.</p>
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<p>Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) (cont.)</p>	<p>These Pillars are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allyship • Education • Indigenous Education • Equity Consultation • Employment • Anti-Racism Advisory • Jews of Colour Leadership • Programming and Partnership • Jews of Colour Voices <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>CARE Unit</p>	<p>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 victimized by or at risk of sexual exploitation. There are bi-weekly implementation meetings chaired by representatives from the Ministry and a joint human sex trafficking protocol was recently signed. JF&CS participates in these meetings to learn about the work being done with these high-risk youth.</p>

KEY PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

<p>CAS/VAW (Violence Against Women) Collaboration Advisory Committee</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Roundtable</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Central Zone Children's Aid Societies</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Children's Service System Review and Consultation (CSSRC)</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Special Needs Advisory Group (SNAG)</p>	<p>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.</p>

<p>Working Group to address the issues facing servicing families with a child who has Complex Special Needs</p>	<p>This working group, of which JF&CS is a member, explores multiple issues facing families with children with Complex Special Needs and seeks to address gaps in the greater system beyond Child Welfare. Children with Complex Special Needs have historically come into the care and custody of CASs across the province because their families have not been able to cope with and manage their care. This group, along with representatives from the MCCSS is looking into ways in which these families can be supported, and how to advocate provincially and with other sectors so that parents do not lose custody of their children in the absence of child protection concerns.</p>
<p>Director of Service Group (OACAS)</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Duty To Report</p>	<p>Several JF&CS child protection workers regularly attend schools (Jewish Day Schools and public schools), synagogues, camps, and other organizations, in order to provide information and training with respect to child abuse and neglect, as well as to educate professionals on their mandated "Duty to Report".</p>
<p>Education Liaison Program</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FASD) Leadership Team</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Help Ahead</p>	<p>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. Currently the intake line is available to access day treatment and residential treatment programs and there are plans to bring all children's mental health services and programs in 2025.</p>

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.
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.
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.

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